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THE
DESTRUCTION OF GOTHAM.

BY
JOAQUIN MILLER.

FUNK & WAGNALLS.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
PROLOGUE.....	5
CHAPTER I.	
CROSSING A FERRY.....	11
CHAPTER II.	
IN THE GREAT CITY.....	17
CHAPTER III.	
MADISON SQUARE AT NIGHT.....	27
CHAPTER IV.	
REPORTERS.....	33
CHAPTER V.	
AN OPEN HEART.....	40
CHAPTER VI.	
AN OPEN HAND.....	47
CHAPTER VII.	
A BOHEMIAN AT DINNER.....	57
CHAPTER VIII.	
PORPOISE AND OTHER FISHES.....	68
CHAPTER IX.	
THE SHADOW OF A TRAGEDY.....	74
CHAPTER X.	
A FIFTH AVENUE AFTERNOON.....	83
CHAPTER XI.	
"PROTECTION".....	93

	PAGE
CHAPTER XII.	
DOWN-TOWN.....	107
CHAPTER XIII.	
"A PLAGUE-SPOT".....	119
CHAPTER XIV.	
CLINGING TO THE WRECK.....	130
CHAPTER XV.	
IN A NERVOUS STATE.....	137
CHAPTER XVI.	
THE MAN WITH A CLOSED HAND.....	145
CHAPTER XVII.	
THE UNINVITED GUEST.....	153
CHAPTER XVIII.	
THE APPARITION.....	163
CHAPTER XIX.	
"THE PUBLIC".....	172
CHAPTER XX.	
TWILIGHT STUDIES.....	180
CHAPTER XXI.	
"WE, THE PEOPLE".....	184
CHAPTER XXII.	
VERY TIRED.....	190
CHAPTER XXIII.	
"WHOSE CHILD IS THIS?".....	197
CHAPTER XXIV.	
"FIRE!".....	206

PROLOGUE.

Twelve Drunken Women Sent Up.

POLICEMAN WEMER arraigned before Justice O'Reilly, in the Tombs Police Court, yesterday, twelve filthy-looking women. He charged them all with drunkenness.

Justice O'Reilly sentenced them to the Island for one month.

The janitor of the Tombs sprinkled carbolic acid about the room after the women were led off to jail.—*Evening Telegram, New York, June 24.*

* * * * *

A Baby in the Police Court.

To-day, when the car-driver, R., arose to plead drunkenness, induced by want and overwork, in palliation of the crime for which he was to be sentenced, a baby voice cried out from down in the dirty crowd: "Oh, mamma, dar's poor papa! Papa, tome and tiss baby." But "poor papa" was sent away from "baby" fifteen years, for his drunken crime. And we stop here to wonder where and what "baby" will be when he comes back from the States Prison?

* * * * *

But let us not multiply these daily reports. These are given merely as an example of the life here, the death here—the death of soul; the death of body and of soul.

These two examples are both from the lowly walks of life—the lowest, perhaps.

Let us now take two from the higher walks of life—the highest, perhaps—and then you can guess fairly well what lies between. By striking the highest possible average you can see clearly that a city lies here in the shadow of its doom; that its destruction is not far off if this condition of things long prevails. But here are the

two examples of life from the higher walks. We quote from private letters :

" You should have come to the great dinner. It was the greatest affair that has ever been. Rome, in her palmyest days, was surpassed in every particular. It was a great mistake for you to have said what you did ; for besides the honor and the remembrance of the gorgeous event, we had at least fifty kinds of wines, to say nothing of the brandies, the benedictines, the liquors of all names, nations, and cellars. I am told the dinner cost \$80,000. The *Herald* puts it at a round hundred thousand. Read its ten-column account of it. My head aches too much to write more now. But do not speak of him as being tight-fisted, my boy, after this big dinner."

* * * * *

" DEAR SIR : You are entirely in the wrong about your great-little man 'Stone,' of Wall Street. His habits are most exemplary. And if he has got hold of your money in Wall Street, why he has done no more than you or any other man would have done with his money if you only could have beaten him. No, my friend ; the fact is, the little giant of Wall Street has more money-brains than you and his other enemies. So be manly enough to admit it, and let him alone ; for he has his load in life to bear as well as you and the others. Do you think it any easy thing to take care of fifty railroads and fifty millions of dollars ?

" It is not an easy thing. And if you could have seen his face to-day as I saw it, all furrowed over, as if full of railroad tracks, hard, and dry, and bloodless, twitching nervously now and then as his bright eyes beamed with intense excitement, you would have felt no bitterness at all, but have been your dear old self, and have felt only pity. The fact is, for all his exemplary and well-ordered life, he is far from well in body or in mind. He is compelled to have constant recourse to artificial stimulants to keep up and not fall under the great load under which he stoops. His hand trembles sometimes as if he had an ague. And what wonder ? The life he leads is too arduous. It is unnatural, and, of course, he must resort to unnatural stimulants for support.

" But bear in mind his life is *exemplary*. And even in his weakest moments he never makes a spectacle of himself, as do so many great men. You might be with him all day, I think, and never once see him take a single glass of brandy or anything of the kind in public. And so, whatever his life is or has been, you cannot say that he has set a bad example to any one. But as his life is unnatural and his

nerves constantly strung to the most terrible tension, why he must resort to opiates, and have more than natural support. Yet when the end comes—and it cannot be very far off—no one can say that his life was not exemplary."

* * * * *

Dear and indulgent reader, from the foregoing notes you can gather the argument of this story, I think ; motive enough surely to make a great sketch of ; a condition of things surely to challenge the pity and the help of every brave heart and strong, clear head in this wondrous new land of ours.

The great city lies trembling, panting, quivering in her wild, white heat of intoxication, excitement, madness—drunken and devilish pursuits of power, pleasure, and gold.

It is the old story of the destruction of one whom the gods love. Never grew a city so great, so suddenly great. And her glory, her greatness, her sudden power and splendor have made her mad. She is drunk ; not drunk entirely with drink, but she is drunk with riches and with the love of pleasure. Altogether, she is madly, desperately drunk.

And where will it all end ? Where have such things always ended ? Nay, do not turn back too hastily into history for the thousand examples there. You remember Paris ? her twenty-five years of glory, recklessness, irreligion, ill-gotten riches ? And then the conflagration !

In conversation with Gambetta soon after the murder of the Bishops, the battles in the graveyards, where Parisians, slain by Parisians, lay as thick on top of the ground as under it, the great Dictator told me that the new Paris had been built in madness, and so was burned in madness.

"Belleville," he cried, with energy, "should never have been left out there to herself! Champs Elysées should never have been permitted to exist apart from the people! The two should have been mixed up together, so that the poor could have shared the cares of the rich, and the rich the cares of the poor."

No fable of *Æsop* can save a city now as when the people of Rome went out and left the politicians behind.

No; the people will not go out of the cities now; for it is the people who build the cities; and the people will possess them. If either class is compelled to retire, it will not be the poor—the PEOPLE. Here in this wonderful city you have all the wealth at one end. You have all the poverty at the other. The poor are in the majority—"WE, THE PEOPLE!" The distance between the rich and the poor is not great. The line that divides is only an air line, that may be crossed or erased at any moment.

Hunger, oppression, drunkenness; a hundred drunken men; a puff of smoke! The end! In this story, as you follow poor "Dot" in her flight up Broadway and on up Fifth Avenue, pursued by the red-faced monster, you must keep in mind this condition of things; also this madness, this wild fever-heat, this excitement, this drunkenness, where men, women—all things are strung up to a tension that is terrible to bear.

The great book of this great city has never been written. The stream of life here has been too swift for any mind to follow or depict it with truth and precision.

This desperate pursuit of wealth, this constant and prevailing resort to stimulants, even by the most "exemplary," has made an order of life that is new upon earth. The blood in men's veins is at fever-heat. This drives

them on to the consummation of deeds that have no parallel, that have had no historian.

But I have kept back this ugly and offensive beast in the dark places as far as possible. We catch a breath of the fumes of alcohol only as we hastily pass up and down Fifth Avenue now and then, and that is about all. More than that might offend just now, and mar the force of the story. But I am willing that you shall understand very clearly, and from the first, and all the time, that the paragraph at the head of this Prologue is the argument and the excuse for this work.

And if you will now turn back a page and read it over you will see clearly that a story devoted entirely to these twelve women would not only be unpleasant, but would be a work entirely fruitless for good. I will merely mention the fact that they were wives of laborers, car-drivers, freight-handlers, and so on. They were not immoral women. One of them, I learned, had once been a teacher in the public schools.

The point is to begin at the bottom and make it finally impossible for such things to transpire in the light of the sun, here in the grandest commercial centre of the world.

The like of such scenes must and shall be made impossible, though we are dust when it is done.

* * * * *

And now, as you, after the haste and fashion of the time, run swiftly through these pages, I implore you look a little carefully at the character of the man with the hundred and more millions of money. Look at the man with the vast smile and the big, red, round hands that holds them so tightly clasped, as if he feared that one of these hundred millions of dollars should escape from his big, fat hands and fall to the ground.

Look at him. Think of him. Is he happy?

Look at him at the last, when he sits in his great brown-stone palace, all alone, after the grandest *fête* that was ever given.

See him sitting there all alone with his glass. See him lift his glass to his lips, and set it down untasted, for some one has come and sat down in the chair opposite, and is looking him in the face. Some one has come and sat down in the chair opposite, and also sets another sort of glass down on the table between them—Death, with his hour-glass !

Oh, the agony of that time ! The terror of that man ! Happy ?

Well, his life and his death ought to be of some use to the world. I think that God meant it as an example, to show how worthless this wealth is which we are all so drunken and mad about.

And, if you please, look at the nervous, treacherous little giant of Wall Street as you hasten through these pages.

You do not see much of him, for he is so unpleasant. Like the twelve women at the head of this prologue, he is as unpleasant in soul as they in body.

If he should walk through these pages much I would have to sprinkle them with carbolic acid, as the janitor did the Tombs.

But you get a good glimpse of his back as he leaves the stage and flies away from the face of man in his delirium and madness. A strange drunkenness is this of his, a silent, sullen drunkenness ; a drunkenness of soul as well as of body, as if his dark, desperate, despicable little soul had grown drunk in the blood of the innumerable victims he plundered and finally drove to suicide.

THE DESTRUCTION OF GOTHAM.

CHAPTER I.

CROSSING A FERRY.

ONE May edging on June, and late in the afternoon, coming in against the tide of people pouring out, a dark-eyed, shy, and timid girl, with a hesitating air, a face lifted, tired and helpless, toward the great city beyond the river before her, stepped on the ferry-boat as it ground against the groaning and swaying timbers. She looked back over her shoulder as if she feared she might be pursued ; or, maybe, it was habit made her look back and about in a weary and troubled way.

Unhappy people are always looking back. They look wearily back, as if they had lost something, left something behind. Happiness ?

This dark-eyed, silent child—for she was only a child—had been seen by some of the men nearly all day hovering around the wharf, not quite decided to cross, yet not daring to turn back.

She had been seen also by an old monster, a woman with a foreign accent and a breath smelling of garlic and gin. As for this creature with the bad breath and a dirty basket on her arm, all men who knew New York well knew her ; and they knew her business perfectly, too.

This wonderful city—this marvellous city here by the

sea—seems to me like the sudden blossom and flower of a germ planted far back in the dawn of time. Rome has her certain and definite days of carnival. This wonderful new city of New York has three hundred and sixty-five days of mad, maddening, wild, and delirious carnival every year.

Her merriment is a type of madness. She never rests. She never sleeps. She has not slept since the days of her birth and baptism. Even her people scarcely seem to sleep. They run forward day and night, night and day, until each one, in the impetuous rushing, comes suddenly to the end of his road, and so falls headlong in his grave. And falling so, rushing forward so, you sometimes see, in the twilight, in the dusky evening of the carnival, that two are rushing, running, hand in hand. The one falls suddenly ; the hand lets go ; the kind earth closes her lips and says no word ; and the next year the place of the grave, the face of the dead—all are forgotten. Forgotten, because in the place of the one that has perished, however beautiful, however brave, gifted, good, ten others have poured in from the countless forces of the earth ; ten others, all equally brave, good, gifted, beautiful.

Let us cross the moat which surrounds this mighty citadel and take part in the splendor, the glory, the delight, the mad revelry, the misery there ; for to know this city is to know the universe. All Europe, all Asia, all Africa, the whole wide earth has sent up her best, worst, weakest, strongest—ay, most wicked, wild, and reckless people to the building of this new Babel.

This ditch, surrounding this stronghold—this island, which has gold enough heaped upon it to sink it—has many drawbridges crossing it from many ways. Over these ugly ferries, these wooden drawbridges, cross-

at each other and gave the field up to the two handsome young men who had first set out in the chase. Such is this wonderful city.

It was a strange, a stirring scene, as the boat drew out across the Hudson. The great city seemed to rise up in its strength and splendor as the sun sank in the west.

Away to the right, down the busy bay, ships of far-off lands went to and fro, seeking the golden fleece of commerce ; great, stately ships, with a thousand happy souls, came sailing in from Europe ; little steam-tugs shot in and out, vicious and piratical-looking ; revenue ships sent to lay tribute on the strangers—the weary travellers coming to their rest—forbidding the landing of those who thought to come to a land of liberty, laying tribute on all who come to our white sea-doors seeking peace and the right ; thousands of men with officers over them, with oaths fashioned to be broken, bribes in one hand and Bibles, “greasy with oaths,” in the other ; and so all these things to the right, to the left, the silver Hudson sliding to the ocean ; the city rising in glory in the east as the sun settled in the west ; the spluttering and splashing ferry-boat, rocking, groaning, sighing, almost crying out with pain, drew hastily in toward New York.

One of the two handsome young men who had turned back with his friend to follow the dark eyes and Madonna face hurriedly approached the old hag and thrust some money in her hand.

He was quick about it, but not quick enough to escape the eye of an officer set to watch such as she. Instantly the officer approached the two men. But only one of them fled.

The other young man coolly and quietly thrust his thumb and forefinger in his left vest-pocket, let his hand

fall down in close fellowship with that of the officer's, and then he passed on unmolested.

On these boats you sometimes see another class of men. They are pale, thin, sometimes starved-looking. They say little. They are not there to talk, but to write. What they see, just what they see—no more, no less—will be set down in the papers. They are reporters, teachers in the great University of Life.

One of these newspaper men, a timid, tired, and sensitive-looking man of middle age, pale, impractical, a poet with his wings trailing in the wet and mire, saw all this ; saw man and monster exchange glances ; saw that all was well understood, and that in the great city, in the next day's carnival, or the next—maybe the next week, next month, certainly some time, this young man, this New Yorker, would demand and receive of the old monster an account of her stewardship. But let us follow this girl now in the great city.

CHAPTER II.

IN THE GREAT CITY.

It is estimated that every day hundreds of young women enter New York never to return. More than as many young men, also strangers, young, eager, ambitious, pour in upon the wonderful city from the South, the East, the West—from the four parts of the world.

The girls are mostly good girls. The men are honest and industrious in the main. They have left poverty, obscurity, ignorance—all that is intolerable to pride and spirit and enterprise—behind them. This is the temple of fortune, where all may enter and implore their goddess.

There is much to do here ; money to be had for honest labor ; a world to see. There are more than two hundred thousand women at work here. So you see clearly there is no shame in entering the great city for a young girl, even alone, if she comes here to work, to learn, to earn bread for those she loves and leaves behind.

But there are many motives. Sometimes a poor girl, disheartened at home, heartsick and solitary in the far-out silence of the rural home, sees a certain newspaper, famous, or rather infamous, for its coarse and suggestive "personals," couched in language she does not quite understand, but reads as one reads a romance or listens to the story of Aladdin's lamp.

There is love waiting for her in the parks, the cool and restful places ; strong and handsome men, rich, romantic

as herself, are ready to receive her. This is the picture as she sees it. She is quite certain she can protect herself ; and anyhow she will have seen New York—she will have seen the great city, whatever comes of it.

This girl, with this romantic nature, is drawn thus into the great maelstrom.

And this girl, who has no fixed purpose of toil and no lasting bravery in earnest effort, appears on the surface. She swims for a day, a year, sinks, drowns, dies. She perishes utterly ; and her name, alas and alas ! is legion.

The pretty child whom we have seen enter the city was not quite of this latter class ; neither was she of the former.

Indeed, there are many more reasons than the general ones just given why a young and beautiful girl enters a city alone. Some seek it to hide. Some come to find friends. This one was, perhaps, more nearly of the latter class.

A wicked smile of satisfaction lit up the old woman's face as she saw the girl set foot on shore. She was now in the great city, on the monster's own ground, in her trap. She would take her own time to lay hand upon her now. She had been half afraid all the way the girl would turn back to the other side ; but now there was no turning back.

The old woman could see from the red stains of soil on the girl's worn shoes that she had walked a long way from her home, wherever that home may have been. Therefore she must be very weary, and could not go far. She would follow her closely ; offer her hospitality ; take her to a boarding-house hard by.

Exchanging a glance of perfect understanding with the handsome young man who had given her the money and now stood leisurely biting off the end of a cigar prepara-

11/22

tory to lighting it and returning with his companion across the ferry, she hoisted her old basket up a little higher on her big, fat arm, and stepped briskly on after the beautiful girl.

The woman, who gave some signs of a knowledge of good society, came quickly on, turned sharp across the girl's way as she sped on, her great, honest eyes to the ground, and crossed her path sharply on the pavement.

The poor child looked up, saw the leering face, and instinctively and instantly, with a half-suppressed cry of alarm, left the pavement and fled across the street.

She sped up the street on the other side as fast as her feeble limbs could carry her, till quite out of sight. A low chuckle of surprise, not unmixed with admiration, was all that escaped the old woman. She did not attempt to follow her at the moment any farther. She saw that she had been mistaken, and was glad.

Here was a real prize—one worth winning. She would have her yet, of course. It was only a question of time and care.

She turned aside into an alley, set down her basket, fumbled in her greasy pocket for a greasy bunch of keys, unlocked the greasy door, took up her greasy basket and entered, slamming the door hastily behind her.

The girl pushed on, confused, frightened, lost in the wilds of civilization! Each step forward bore her only deeper in the heart of this new and to her almost terrible wilderness.

At last she came to the great, throbbing, pulsing artery of the mighty city.

This was an impassable river. It had been impassable to many a stouter heart than hers at a time like this, when all the world seemed pouring up Broadway to the upper city.

The sidewalk was a rushing river of humanity, flowing upward and on, with thundering vehicles, which packed and blocked the strong, roaring street.

This stream, this rushing river of humanity, caught her up and bore her on ; and in this she found a singular and fearful satisfaction. She would at least be hidden in the midst of the sweeping, surging stream from the monster whom she felt was still pursuing her.

To one accustomed to cities and strange forms and faces all this seems absurd. To one who, familiar only with woods, wilds, the face of nature, comes suddenly, weak, worn, frightened, upon a great city with its surging crowd of humanity escaping from the day's toil, it is perfectly unintelligible.

This girl did not know whether or not she was being borne on in the right direction ; yet she could not have asked any one of the dense crowd if it had been to save her life. And would any one have stopped to answer if she had ?

Yes, she had a vague purpose, a place to go to ; some one to seek—her cousin, Hattie Lane, one whom she had seen but once before, long ago, when her indulgent young parents, now dead, had seen better days ; when, in a happy, dreamful time, Cousin Hattie had visited them in the country.

This child, the only issue of an unhappy love match, had been very tenderly reared—too tenderly. She had been kept in ignorance of the city, the world, life. And so when her father, a ruined officer of the Southern army, died suddenly, and was followed to the grave in a few days by his young wife, leaving the girl penniless, what did she know ? What could she do ?

When May came on—when all the world was waking up, stirring, moving, pulsing, and throbbing with warm

new life, this girl, helpless in her management of affairs, friendless because penniless and proud, left all behind her, and as if on a point of honor, taking not so much as the price of a night's lodging with her, set out from the little village in the hills to reach her cousin, who she believed, from old letters found in her mother's trunk, lived far up on Fifth Avenue.

The girl had written to her cousin in the city when the great trouble came ; but no answer. Yet do something, go somewhere, she must. The remembrance of this one friendly face was the loadstone. True, she might not be made right welcome ; but she would learn to work. She would go into the kitchen, even, till she learned to do something to earn her bread, and something better offered.

Then, there were younger sisters. Maybe she could serve them ; be a maid in waiting ; tend the door of the great, grand house on Fifth Avenue—do anything that was honest and right to earn her bread, and not be dependent upon strangers who despised her for her helplessness and her pride ; and, let it be also added, for her dangerous beauty.

It is said if you throw even the smallest pebble in the middle of the sea the ripples will roll and recede till they reach the utmost shore of the ocean.

This helpless and lone girl here, borne along with the throng, was a waif, a ripple, a last feeble wave of the civil war breaking on the strong and stony shores of the North.

The force of the human stream flowing up the roaring street, the rapidity of it, the velocity and the rush of it, gave her strength to keep steadily on with it for a long, long time.

She had traversed almost the whole of that distance of

Broadway reaching from Liberty Street to Fifth Avenue before the melting away of the crowd left her unsupported on either side, as it were, and brought real weakness to her limbs.

And by good fortune she then caught sight of the desired numbers of the cross streets on the lamp-posts. This gave her help, and she wearily, slowly but surely, kept on in the gray twilight.

The mist and fog crept up the streets on her right hand, and she heard the doleful call of the fog-horns as if the wail of monsters that had lost their way in the gathering night.

To the left, away down the dark brown streets, she saw ships sailing up and down cheerily.

All at once the electric lights flashed out above her head, and on and up the avenue. It was so brilliant, so sudden, that she was almost blinded. She stopped and threw up her weary hands in this weird confusion of light and sound and strange things above and about her as one drowning; and then, in the full light, face to face, she saw grinning there before her the fat and greasy old woman of the ferry.

But she did not seem so fat and greasy now. In fact, had it not been for her bright and wicked eyes, that seemed to burn in their intensity, the girl had hardly remembered her.

This old woman had merely muttered between her teeth as she turned back from her an hour before and up her alley: "*Ah! mon Dieu!* it's Fifth Avenue; it's a Fifth Avenue bird. I must go there;" and she glanced up at the elevated railroad as she spoke.

As we have seen, she arrived on Fifth Avenue before the girl; but she came not with the basket and the bearing of a market-woman at all. On the contrary, she

wore silk and bore a parasol of silk—red silk, black silk, and silken ribbons of all the hues of the rainbow.

She stood there in the heart of the fashionable city, arrayed in all splendor, as if she owned the avenue. Evidently she had been there before, and knew her trade in all its fearful points and branches.

Ample time she had had to dress and reach this fashionable quarter as soon as the weary and discouraged little stranger. She had taken the "L" road.

"My dear," began the woman.

The girl did not speak. Her hands clutched together as the miserable old French monster glanced and grinned at her tears. There were not many people passing. The cold fog blowing over the town from the east had emptied the streets of humanity. The fog-horns called dolefully in the distance; almost within reach of her left hand, as it seemed to her, although it was blocks away, the elevated railway cars made a stream of fire high up in the gathering night.

"Mademoiselle, they have sent me to bring you. It is just here, my beautiful mademoiselle. Come!"

The woman pointed back over her shoulder toward Thirty-second Street with the thumb of her left hand emphatically, insolently, as she said, in a coarse and commanding tone: "Come with me." With the other hand she attempted to seize the girl by the arm. Children of the wilderness are easily startled in cities—in strange cities particularly. They are almost like wild beasts at first; they are afraid of everything.

The animal—all the wild animal—is aroused in them; and if I could be persuaded to believe in the folly of Darwin and doubt the ability of God to create man directly and at once after His own image, I should be

more influenced by this one evidence that we had come up through a race of animals than by any other. For you may take almost any one from a city and set him down in the woods for a day alone, and he is soon almost as wild as a wild animal, and will fly from the face of man. A child will take upon itself all the wildness of a wild beast in a much less time if left alone in the woods than a man. The civilization of years can be overthrown in almost any human being in a very few days. In a little time we return to our real nature.

Darwin might have argued his cause better than he has.

The girl, with all her gathered strength of desperate fear, sprang into the middle of the street, crossed it, and fled on up-town, looking back only after she was a full block away for the cause of her dread and alarm. The persistent old Frenchwoman with the colored parasol was slowly but surely following in the driving and dreary fog. The girl redoubled her steps.

You—you who know the city, would have paid no attention, felt no fear, gone quietly on your course. If persecuted or too hard pushed you would merely, at most, have called an officer and given the woman in custody.

This old woman had read correctly the great, timid eyes. The broad country hat, covering the wealth of tumbled black curls, told all she cared to know of the history, the helplessness, the honest fear of this poor, tired stranger.

She followed leisurely, confidently; she even gayly swung her gay parasol, so out of place at that hour and in the dismal mist, and felt perfectly certain of her prey.

The bright and cheery lights flashed pleasantly through peeps in the great, curtained windows as the girl lifted

her face in fear and trembling for the number she sought.

Her heart leapt up with the first real delight of the dreary and perilous day as she saw she was so near to safety. She hurried on faster than ever before. Glancing back, she saw that the woman was nearer now than when she last saw her. By what means had she glided so swiftly upon her? The girl now almost ran. She must reach her number—517—before that woman came up; she felt, somehow, she must do this or die.

She knew that if the woman spoke to her she could not speak, not answer her, nor control her feet, but would break into precipitate flight—fly anywhere, she knew not where, but fly on, and on, and on.

At last, breathless, she came to the number. She struggled up the great, massive stone steps, dragged herself to the door, and pulled the bell with all her might.

The woman did not attempt to come up the steps after her, but noting the number and quietly chuckling to herself, passed on and stood on the corner of the block, a dozen doors away.

A trim, slim, and liveried man, with a red face and a dainty hand, opened the door. A flood of soft light fell upon the poor girl in black, and lay like a mantle upon her.

A halo seemed to play about the beautiful head. She almost fell upon her knees with thankfulness and praise; but the elegant figure before her did not reach a hand. No word of welcome did she hear. The well-drilled servant stood as still, as straight, as mute as a post. She struggled to speak. At last, in a voice that frightened even herself, she gasped:

“Colonel Lane?”

“Does not live here.”

"Does not live here? Then—then—where is he?"

"Do not know; failed last year; gone; and, miss, they don't want no help here, miss."

The great door closed. The servant drew back the flood of light and glory with him, and the girl stood there as one cast forever out of paradise into eternal darkness. The old woman came back slowly toward her as she tottered, heartbroken and desolate, down the great stone steps. The terrible, grinning creature before her knew all that had happened. It had happened before. She had waited. Now the reward!

CHAPTER III.

MADISON SQUARE AT NIGHT.

WHEN the door closed in the face of the poor girl on the steps of the great Fifth Avenue mansion, and she found herself again in the street, it seemed to her that she must sink down and die where she stood.

Alone in the great city—so utterly alone, so weary, so worn and hungry, faint, frightened almost out of her senses as she thought of the old woman coming to lay hold of her if she did not fly, and fly instantly.

But where could she go now? Up the street or down the street? To the East River or the North River?

Looking over her shoulder, she saw that the fat and leering old creature was only a few doors away. There was but one course open now, but one way of escape. She hastily turned about and took that course as fast as she could fly.

Surely she was not in her best senses now. Her terror was the terror of a child who has seen, or rather fancies she has seen, a monster in the dark, and flies to her mother.

But this poor child had no mother to fly to this side the great dark river of death. The only mother that she had waiting now this side of heaven was Mother Earth. Come, let us see what became of her.

Nearly sixteen years before this dreary, weary night, in the prond, strong city, the now terrified child had come down out of heaven alone, helpless, naked, and had rosted safe in a fond and grateful mother's arms.

The mother had made her very welcome, this little waif entrusted to her keeping through God's hand, reaching silently and unseen from out the great somewhere.

A tiny thing, so small, so helpless, and so alone, had filled completely that mother's whole wide world.

Right here it may not be out of place for us all to pause and reflect that every poor waif of this world, no matter how poor, lone, friendless, despised, did, at one time, fill some such young mother's cup of life completely with unalloyed delight.

I think a reflection like this might make the most of us just a trifle more humane and tender to the wretched. And here is another thought—and oh, the comfort of it in the desolate days of abandonment and despair!—any one of us, even the most miserable, had at one time, in the beginning of our troubled journey of this life, the entire love of some sweet woman, the one undisputed place close to her warm and grateful heart!

This frail child, flying here now, frightened, looking back in terror, had been so small, so frail at first. People are like plants. Some plants are strong and tall and amply able, even in the beginning; some are so little, so frail and feeble, that they can hardly find their way through the ground. These flowers are the sweetest.

This little girl had been called "Dot" in the beginning. Maybe it was because she was so small. Maybe it was because the happy mother wanted to call her daughter a pet name, and so shortened it into this. After awhile she was called Dottie. "This was the name she had when I first knew her—Dottie Lane. I never knew that she had any other name."

This last sentence is taken from the testimony of one of the witnesses at the inquest.

Finally the old woman began to show impatience as

she looked after the flying child. She stopped in the empty street after a few blocks, and it seemed as if at last the girl was to escape her brutal clutches.

A man entering the elegant club-house at the corner distinctly heard the old monster muttering dreadful oaths, as she paused, puffing and blowing, at the edge of the curbstone. The man—not a New Yorker—stopped suddenly, looked at her. He knew her and her purpose. She felt this, and, closing her lips, she kept sulkily on. Then she apparently reflected that she must earn her money, and she redoubled her pace on down Murray Hill toward Madison Square.

Over this beautiful square, the centre of all that is splendid, costly, and attractive in the most opulent city of the earth, there had recently risen a glory like a sunrise, a something altogether new, strange, indescribable, matchless, and magnificent—a lofty shaft of electric light.

People had stood for the first few days, or rather nights, in tens of thousands in a vast circle, as if held there in awe and admiration.

By degrees they had melted away and gone on in their various swift pursuits in the great city. No pen had attempted to describe this new splendor of the night. The world had come to accept it as one of the mighty mile-posts set up in the march of the genius of man.

It seemed like a miracle ; but it was soon accepted as a scientific fact.

Beautiful woman in the great city saw that she was even more beautiful in this miraculous light. Gay, ardent men made love with even more fervor than before under its soft and sensuous rays ; and the world moved on.

Yet this strange, new thing can never grow old. Here is a creation by the hand of man. Man has made something out of nothing.

Out of what has he created this? From what dark laboratory of science has he brought forth this marvelous, this miraculous light?

When the beautiful girl had dragged her weary limbs past the Brunswick and come full into the burst of light, with all the friendly trees before her, a cry of joy burst from her lips. Oh, the cheering, alluring, and restful light!

Oh, the kind, outreaching arms of her old and familiar trees! She ran to the outstretched arms of the largest tree in the centre of the park as to the arms of her mother.

Close behind her had come the old woman. But this mighty circle of light, this new halo about the head of science, appalled her.

She feared the light. It seemed to draw an impassable circle about the poor girl, which she, with a sort of superstition, did not, for a time at least, dare to cross. And while the girl sought the inmost heart of the new-leaved trees close under the lofty shaft of light, and there threw herself on an iron bench as one almost dead, her pursuer hovered, with an oath on her lips, on the edge of the mighty circle of light under the branches of the trees.

Here, close to the curbstone, almost under these trees, stands perpetually a row of cabs. The woman waddled to one of the tall, strong, vicious-looking cabmen familiarly, and threw her left thumb back toward the heart of the park. He knew her, knew her business, for he had seen the girl pass, and so he promptly answered her with a knowing wink and a nod.

She felt stronger and greatly encouraged as, through the new leaves far away in the centre of the park, she saw the girl totter and fall into the cold iron arms of the chilly and dripping iron bench.

At last the game had been brought to bay. True, she was very tired herself—almost as tired as the girl. But her work was at last nearly accomplished.

She took in a long breath of satisfaction, sauntered on along the line of cabmen, and finally, coming back, with an eye now and then thrown toward the little black heap in the centre of the square, she fell into earnest conversation with the first of these petty land pirates to whom she had spoken.

After awhile he drew something from his ample pocket, looked about, and handed it to the woman. She stepped up to the cab door, put her head in, raised the bottle, and drank long and gratefully.

Ah! you hate, abhor this monster! Stop! Abhor and hate the handsome, gay, dissolute men of this wonderful city who make her trade, and the growing trade of those like her, profitable. Look at the great gamblers, the big, red-faced men, with their big, red fists clutching tight and close to their millions upon millions. These are the men who maintain her in her trade—great spiders, in their webs of wire and railroad tracks, waiting to devour the body and soul she brings. Destroy these, and you destroy her. Hers is a hard business at best, full of peril and unpleasant work. She earns her money.

To destroy this new and growing traffic, this dire fungus growing out of the unexampled opulence of this city, this more than Roman revelry and recklessness, you must know this woman, know these men. Hence these pages. 6

CHAPTER IV.

REPORTERS.

A GREAT dinner was being given at Delmonico's, just across the street, that night. The great generals of a fratricidal war, who had sold their independence, if not their honor, to the great politicians of the great city for houses and horses and purses of money which had been "presented" to them, were being entertained by the great politician of a great and grateful party.

It was important that these great soldiers should make great speeches. To this end some able but honest, and hence threadbare, reporters were necessarily a part of this great company. Some of these reporters were now hastening to their respective newspaper offices down at the other end of the city. They had been told by the managers of this magnificent affair what the great generals would say, or rather should say, and each, sharing his notes with his fellows in helpful fraternity, was hastening on his way.

One of these saw the old woman talking emphatically with the cabman. The liquor had warmed her for her work. It had floated her wicked nature very near to the surface. She talked loud and aggressively as she now and then jerked her thumb back in the direction of the little heap now doubled up in a corner of the iron bench under the great white light that gleamed high in the air like a halo around some sacred and dimly outlined image.

The doleful fog-horns had died away. The last re-

maining elements of storm and winter, which had battled long to hold, even in this lovely month, some place in the city, had now fled to the north.

The night was clear and beautiful. The stars seemed to recognize the rivalry of this new light on earth, and shone with uncommon lustre from all the awful arch of heaven.

The moon came shouldering up in the east in all her full glory, and looked down with undiminished splendor against this new creation of the children of men.

This made the quaintest tracery of leaves on the smooth, hard pavement, and paths in and about the square, ever seen.

A light wind lifted the new leaves, and shadows danced up and down and about the poor girl under the great white light, beautiful as dreams of fairyland.

Her head was low on her breast. Her small brown hand held hard to the iron arms of the bench on either side. She was afraid even as she slept. But she dreamed—dreamed almost beautiful dreams.

And let us thank God for this other world into which we can pass, which we can possess without challenge, price, or question, when weary of this one.

She dreamed she had found her strong and beautiful cousin, Hattie Lane ; that Hattie had gone only a little way farther on, and would soon be back and take her home, where it was warm and bright. She felt that she was cold and full of pain ; but in her dreams she knew Hattie would come.

I do not know that I have described Hattie Lane to you perfectly. And yet it seems to me that the very name means strength, purity, splendor of mind, character, form, and face. I always remember her, somehow, as a sort of magnolia tree.

But people reared in the woods are too apt, I think, to associate those they love or admire with some stately or impressive tree or flower.

This fair and perfect woman was one of the few born in the great city. She had grown with its growth. She loved this city. She thought she knew it well ; at all events, she felt equal to it at all times and under all circumstances.

But her father, as we have seen, in the whirl of fortune's wheel, had lost his footing on Fifth Avenue. Another woman was mistress of the fine mansion where his daughter had once reigned supreme, the queen of Murray Hill.

And the dethroned queen had not been missed greatly. Hundreds stood ready to take her place. They made up in numbers and in audacity what they lacked in heart and in accomplishments. They were rich—all very rich. The chief requisite was amply at hand.

It was a case of meeting on the social stairway. As she had descended she had met the handsome and brilliant, yet dissolute and daring young Matherson, whom we first saw on the ferry-boat, and who gave the disguised old woman the bountiful fee. Here her feet must take hold.

Having briefly described Hattie Lane, the dethroned queen of society, let us glance at her accepted lover, of whom she knew literally nothing save that he was rich and rising. Yet these things were much—all. Oh, these new men ! They are bold, aggressive, insolent ; misfortune indeed makes strange bedfellows.

Matherson was a typical New Yorker. It is due the great city to say that he was a type only of a type—a man who had grown up in the city suddenly, as mushrooms grow, and from the reeking compost of it, and a chronic drinker.

There were those who had seen this same man, a lad, washing glasses behind a bar, listening as he wrought to the politicians whose glasses he washed.

When he had come of age he not only had saved some money, but he had laid up much general political knowledge of the great city—practical knowledge, too !

He was soon counted a young man of ability and promise by those who count only the money a man obtains. He now left the low haunts and took employment with a broker of much ambition and little character. Both the broker and himself soon stood on solid footing, so far as money went. And now he needed nothing really but character. But his low instincts, as we see, still asserted themselves. He was not yet a gentleman, by a good deal, although his course was upward. Could he ever be a gentleman ?

Lie down on the banks of the Nile and watch the actions of a crocodile. At first you only see his black and ugly head. After awhile, and before you fairly know it, he is half way out of the water ; then he is half way up the bank. He stops here quite a time. Then suddenly he jerks forward and is on a level with you. Another pause, and then the next thing you know he is right alongside of you. Such was Matherson.

But to return to the brilliant scenes of Madison Square. We will see Hattie Lane and her lover in that vicinity soon, arm in arm.

On either hand down the short streets toward the rivers you could see the elevated railway cars, with their lights of many colors, shoot and thunder through the air.

Now and then, a little farther on, the wide, white wings of a ship glistened and gleamed in the breeze as it sailed slowly across the end of the street. The sailors would lift their hats and salute the two mighty lights of

the city at Madison and Union squares as they poured their new-found glory away out over the waters and over the decks of the ships.

Around the island of Manhattan, and even far away at sea, men lifted their faces and marvelled at this wonderful work of man glowing here in the heart of the mighty city.

Commerce had reared her proudest altar here on this most opulent island in all history.

These two mighty lights were two colossal candles set up on the altar of commerce.

"Here! here! you can't sleep 'ere. Don't you know we can't let girls sleep 'ere?"

The policeman struck the iron arm of the bench loudly with his club. The blow shook her little brown hand loose, and, with a cry of alarm, the girl staggered to her feet.

"What are you waiting 'ere for?"

"Hattie Lane," piteously cried the startled girl, clasping her stiffened hands helplessly together.

It was such a wail, such a cry as if for help, a call as if calling for one who was only now with her, maybe, that the officer knew at once that this child was honest—helplessly, pitifully honest.

"Well, sit down and wait; but don't sleep."

He pushed on around a lot of flowers, and then he suddenly stopped, turned, and came back.

"I say"—he tapped the iron arm of the bench with his club, as he saw her head again settling on her breast—

"I say, miss, sleep if you wants to. I'll watch, and if I see 'em comin' by this way—no, don't be afraid now; I mean anybody—I'll wake you up, and you must hold up your head. No, I won't take you to the 'ouse; won't run ye in, sis. You seem square. But, you see,

if I'd let you sleep 'ere, miss, it would break me, it would."

The little head was already low on the weary breast even as he spoke. Peering through the trees he caught sight of the heavy figure of the old woman stealing, in a diminishing circle, nearer and nearer. The well-filled flask of the cabman, who was waiting for his work, had greatly emboldened her.

The officer knew her mission. He continued to keep his eyes on the bench, but moved in her direction. She knew his purpose, and fell back even beyond the square. He followed her, and the two eyed each other at a safe distance across the street.

The reporter had sent his work forward by a brother scribe, and he now witnessed the scene as he stood beneath the shifting shadows. He made a story of it for his paper even as he stood there. There was nothing tangible; nothing had been done. A stranger passing would have seen nothing, suspected nothing. But love, hate, treachery, romance, tragedy—all these were there in inception under the quivering leaves in the little square, under the great light of the wondrous city.

Hattie Lane, holding gracefully the arm of John Matherson, the rich, rising, and handsome man of the ferry-boat, was happy.

A coarse man of this city once remarked, with more force than grammar, "that in New York a man can live as many lives as he has money." Matherson now lived many lives, for he now had much money.

These two were approaching by chance the iron bench under the great white light. The officer suddenly discontinued his surveillance of the woman, whirled about, and came rapidly down the circling path to where the girl sat sleeping. He was almost face to face with the

lovers. He struck the arm of the iron bench as he passed, and the girl was again on her feet. Would she now speak? Would she now utter her startled cry, "Hattie Lane"? Could she only open her parched lips now, cry out and be heard, be known and saved?

Her great eyes looked straight ahead, helpless, and as if she were still asleep. But she spoke no word, and the lovers passed on. Hattie was looking in the face of her lover; he had said something very tender to her. Her eyes, her heart, her whole being, were lifted to him. She saw no one, heard no one. To her nothing existed now save the man she loved.

But he, a perfect New Yorker, cold, deliberate, selfish, saw and understood all—everything. The cabman, the old woman, the officer, even the man of the press, whom he hated and despised too, were no mysteries to him.

Quickening his pace imperceptibly, in a few moments he led, in all his splendid indifference, into the Brunswick, and soon had the whole party at dinner.

It was observed by one of the young ladies that he left the party for a moment to talk to a hard-looking man waiting about the door, and it was observed by her also that the man suddenly disappeared up the street.

But soon they were all gayly laughing, drinking, feasting; and the handsome and dashing John Matherson, bowing now to this friend and now to that, as the gay and gallant *habitués* of the place came and went, seemed to be the happiest and merriest of the merry group.

Suddenly there was a cry of fire, and engines, in a stream of fire, poured up the avenue. The party sprang to their feet; but Matherson coolly put forth his hand,

set them in their places, and the merriment went on. A cab dashed by ; an old woman, looking through the window of the cab, leered as she passed. She held a young girl in her arms. Hattie Lane saw this cab, and wondered if it was dashing on to the fire.

CHAPTER V.

AN OPEN HEART.

"You can live as many lives in New York as you have money to pay for."

With this almost popular sentiment permeating at least a very substantial element of society, it can be understood what a prodigious price men, and women too, are willing to sometimes pay for money.

More than two years had passed since that brilliant May night in Madison Square—that night of blended starlight and moonlight, with occasional drifts of sea fog, when the dingy carriage was seen to whirl toward that doubtful quarter of the city lying between Twenty-sixth and Thirty-second Street hard by, and many changes had taken place.

In this wonderful city the hands of the clock turn swiftly on the face of the dial. Nothing stands still here. Even the tombstones move on. The living demand the places of the dead.

The family of Hattie Lane was even more unfortunate and nearer the brink of what is, commercially speaking, called "ruin" than before. Her helpless old father, helplessly honest, amiable, gentle as an old-world gentleman of a former generation, leaned upon her entirely.

And she took all the load upon her fair white shoulders, and kept a calm demeanor and a brave face before all the world. Born to luxury, bred only in the gentlest ways of life, she found it hard—very hard—to hold her

place and be bright and cheery, with only dismay and ruin before her. In books—indeed in many lands—men—great and good men—select such peerless women for wives : woo them ardently, win them, wed them, love and honor them. But this is a city of commerce, barter, trade. This does not transpire here—not often.

She at last loved Matherson. He seemed so strong and manly, so calm at all times and serene and satisfied, as though he might stand like a wall of fire between her and all trouble when the dark days came. He loved her, too, in his way, after his fashion ; and she thought it the true way. Indeed, he promised all things. She believed all things. And then, he was rich ! Love is faith. Love is faith, hope, and charity. It is all things on this earth.

Matherson had still further advanced his fortunes and his position, too. He held a place of trust and honor and prodigious profit as one of the tribute-takers at this great seaport. He had, by persistent push and political influence, become one of that mysterious, that silent and unseen army of more than a thousand men who are set down by the white sea-doors to watch the coming and going of free men to and from this free country, and whose duty it is to open other people's trunks, examine their clothes, books, boots, cigars, bread, butter—almost all things, indeed, known to man or woman, and pass impartial (?) judgment on their value and to demand tribute accordingly.

He had become a Federal officer with a name. He was now high enough in his ascent to reach the hand of Miss Lane. And she gave it, as we have seen, frankly, bravely, and without a shadow of doubt of his truth, honor, love, and eternal constancy. And yet, who could say it was not all deserved ? Place your finger on a spot

in his character, if you can. Generous he was to all, it seemed. It was really hard for him to pass a stranger soliciting help anywhere and not quietly share his loose coins.

He had a pew at the church—the church, mark you—and was admired by many a fond mother, to say nothing at all of innumerable daughters. He might have married a rich woman. He did not seem to care to do this.

And for this Hattie loved him, if for nothing else, with all her great, warm heart. How could she help it?

Among other changes noted in the years that have passed may be mentioned the fact that fate, or fortune, or misfortune had thrown Walton, the quiet man with the slouch hat, pencil, and note-book, in the frequent presence of Hattie Lane, and under the wheels of her chariot. He too could not help loving her. He could not keep from that; but he could keep from telling his love. He would not trouble her with that. He loved this woman too well to tell her of his love.

This Walton was a unique and simple character. He was always persistently, obstinately, serenely poor. He also had a habit of saying things.

Once a friend of his, a fellow scribe, who went about night and day, like himself, picking up crumbs of fact and fancy to feed the world upon at breakfast, got discouraged.

This friend laid down his pencil and note-book, and in a burst of eloquent despair drew a picture of the splendor of the world about him and the pitiful contrast of his own poverty and meagre pay. Then he brought his fist down emphatically on the old ink-stained table, away up in the reporter's garret, with its crumbling plaster and its one short, sharp, and wicked gas-jet thrusting out at you into your eyes like a lance, and vowed he would

never again take up pencil or note-book, but go out into the world like others and make money.

Walton listened patiently until his friend had finished, and then said quietly, under his broad slouch hat, which he had tilted a little to one side, as a shield against the glaring gas-jet : " My boy, listen to me."

The bright but pale-faced toiler of the press looked at him gloomily.

" My boy," said he, " there are people who are fit for nothing else but to make money. You can do better things than make money."

The companion took up his pencil and book.

Once he said to a group of reporters, as he climbed up to the stuffy garret of his paper : " Boys, I feel mean. I have had every particle of sunshine that God's hand has reached down out of heaven this day. I know that not a single millionaire in all New York has had as much."

It is doubtful, however, that, with all this sunshine, he had really had his supper. At the same time, supper or no supper, it is pretty clear that no millionaire in all the world was as happy as he at that moment. As I have said, this man was a searcher after " character," a lover of " types"—studies in nature he called them.

On the night of the scene of fire, as before described, when all the little world blazed in glory about Madison Square, he too had sprung forward with the rest of humanity in the direction of the cry of danger and peril. The flying horses, with their engines scattering fire and leaving streaks of sparks and flame behind, he followed. He ran swiftly up the street. His duty was to get his crumb of truth for the sleeping and hungry world's breakfast.

When he arrived on the spot, the superintendent was

leaning from his little wagon and talking earnestly with an officer. The engines were turning about to retrace their steps. There was not a vestige of fire to be seen. There had been no fire, no need of alarm. But those who turn out with such swiftness and precision are so in love with their work that they rarely, if ever, make any question or find any fault with a false alarm. They are used to that, too.

Suddenly Walton remembered the little creature whom he had left in the centre of the square under the great light and the shining leaves.

He hastened back ; the girl was gone ; the officer was also gone.

But duty had taken him a little way in the direction of the alarm, and he had, perhaps, not yet returned. Then the reporter saw that the old woman had also gone ; and then he saw that the suspicious-looking cab and its driver had also gone.

Ask the next cabman in what direction, and with whom ? You had as well ask the bronze admiral looking down there from his unsteady stand on the stern of his ship.

The reporter took a turn about the square after writing a line and a half concerning the false alarm—for which he would probably realize the price of a chop for breakfast—but could find no clew—see, hear nothing.

Yet he knew very well that something terrible had happened. He went over to the stained and beautiful windows of the Brunswick, and, passing by, stole a glance within. Matherson was lifting his glass, and in all the splendid authority of health and wealth and happiness, leaning toward Hattie Lane and talking elegantly and well. Walton sighed, shook his head, and went on.

The man put this fact and that fact together, tied

them up with fancy, fastened them together with a sort of imaginary cement, and came certainly to the conclusion that this girl, this strangely beautiful child, with the pitiful rosebud face, had been foully dealt with.

He crossed over to the west, past the Victoria, across Broadway, across Sixth Avenue, and so on down that dreadful block on Twenty-seventh Street to Seventh Avenue.

The place was dimly lighted. The police were studiously invisible. Strange, pitiful faces met his, and looked up and begged for money.

From every door, window, cellar, or garret peered painted faces of all shades of complexion. All kinds of voices, in all tongues, appealed to the man to enter as he hastened on down the dark and bewildering street.

Was she in one of these wretched places? Was she buried in this cellar, or carried to that garret, to be watched and kept for days, weeks, years, with these strange and unearthly inhabitants, who are visible only at night?

The man caught sight of a cab and heard voices down the street in the dark. He ran forward as fast as possible, holding a pistol in his great-coat pocket; but it was only a drunken party of men who had come in from some country town, and were "seeing the sights." The man walked up and down through many of these dim and dangerous streets, even up to Thirty-second Street. Seeing nothing, hearing nothing of the object of his search, he hastened on up Broadway to Fiftieth Street, and there crossed over and strode up Fifth Avenue.

He stood before a great brown-stone palace, here on the right, and waited and watched, and watched and waited. At length he saw Matherson enter there in great haste. He had at his side the wealthiest man in the

world—a man whose great big red fists clutched tightly on to fortune in all other places save this, lest one single dollar might slip from his grasp. When Walton saw these two enter here, he knew too well who had preceded them. He sighed at her fate, at his own helplessness, and sadly shook his head.

He went back and about his duties, still shaking his head, still putting this and that together, then taking his fabric all to pieces and putting it together again in quite another way. And every way he could fix it he could see that old woman, that handsome man of the ferry-boat, the sweet and helpless Madonna face, the big red-faced man with the big, tightly-closed fat hands; and he knew there was a story there to be told some day that would put civilization to shame.

And so with this conviction settled well and firmly in his heart, he gave up all immediate pursuit of his purpose in that direction as the days, weeks, months went by.

It was quite two years from these events, as we have already said, that Walton, walking hastily through Central Park, saw the face of little "Dottie" looking up at him from one of the benches by the path.

At her feet in the grass played a child. This child was very, very beautiful.

It was prettily dressed, too. About its neck was a little gold chain, from which hung a small battered locket. This chain might have been worn at one time by the child-woman called Dottie.

CHAPTER VI

AN OPEN HAND.

WHETHER the scribe, this one of a new and numerous force, a growth of this century entirely, if not alone of this generation, is observant because he is a scribe, or reporter, or whether he is a reporter because he is a close observer, is hardly a question.

Yet this observing man knew the dark and pitiful yet very beautiful face before him perfectly. He had not seen it for two years, but had sought for it all that time.

Very quietly he took a seat at the farther end of the iron bench. He fixed his eyes for a moment on the little doll of a baby playing in its pretty red dress on the clean green grass at the girl's feet, and then glanced at the girl-woman at his side. There was a singularly striking resemblance.

"It is my little niece, sir?"

The girl said this hurriedly, and as she spoke the blood mantled to her face and suffused it with a radiance that made her even more beautiful than before.

Men may take all sorts of innocent liberties with little children.

They are stepping-stones by which we can walk up and into any mother's heart in this world.

"She has your eyes," answered the man, as he took the little thing between his knees.

"She is my little niece, sir."

After a moment he glanced at the girl again, but she

did not look up. Her great wondering eyes were fixed upon the grass at her feet. The blood had gone from her face. She was pale, and the old frightened look came back.

She rose up, took the child tenderly by the hand, and without a word turned away.

The man, with instinctive politeness, arose as she arose. He lifted his hat courteously, and bowed very unobtrusively as she moved a few steps up the path.

She paused here, turned about, and came part of the way back. The man's quiet politeness had conquered her and put her at perfect ease.

Perhaps she had not been used to this for a long, long time.

"I think there is—is a better view of the obelisk and the carriages and the—the people a little farther up the path; and I think I—I—we can find a seat up there."

There was a far-away look in her great eyes all this time as she stood there, talking and hesitating, doubting, half fearing, dreading she knew not what.

She now and then glanced down the wooded drive where the carriages came pouring in and up the park, like a flood-tide, for the afternoon drive.

She was looking for some one, the man thought, as she moved up the pretty path and sat down by the full-flowing stream of gorgeous carriages and prancing horses.

The girl set the child between them on the bench. She did not speak, but kept up her eager glance up and down the sweeping, whirling drive.

"What is her name?"

"Dollie."

"Dollie? It is a pretty name—almost as pretty as she is; and that is saying it is very pretty indeed."

The girl's face glowed with pleasure, and she lifted

her great, sad eyes to the man and looked at him gratefully.

"But Dollie what? Dollie is a dear little name, but it is not enough of a name," said the man, half smiling.

The girl hastily arose, turned, took up the child, and moved to the extreme edge of the seat.

The old trouble swept over her face, and she twisted her hands together nervously, and bit her great rich lips with evident displeasure.

She looked far down the line of carriages—looked across at the crowd of merry children riding the little ponies, driving the goats in carriages, and still farther on her eyes fastened for a time on the snowy flock of sheep sliding their black noses along the short green grass.

The man took a paper from his pocket and began to read.

The child looked at him for a moment, and then sliding down from its mother's side, toddled along the side of the bench, holding on carefully and looking up all the time.

She finally wedged herself in between the man's knees and stood there, still and satisfied, as he read on.

Surely this was no spoiled child. This child had never clambered on any man's knees, pulled his watch-chain, and taken him by the beard. All this the reporter thought out very clearly as he pretended to read on.

"Just Dollie, that's all." The girl said this half to herself, yet loud enough for the man to hear.

He heard her perfectly, but read on.

After awhile, with another look down the incoming line of splendid equipages, she half arose and came close to the man, as if she would relieve him of the trouble of the child. He only seemed to read more intently than before.

"Only Dollie. That's all the name she's got now. And she's my little niece, sir."

The seal of silence had not yet been broken on that sweet babe's lips.

God's finger, placed there when she left His presence in heaven, lest she might tell of the glories there before she had quite forgotten them, had not yet been lifted, and she could speak no word yet.

The secrets of all heaven and of all earth too were safe with her.

If she had any other name than Dollie she might no more tell of it than the dead.

All this and many other strange and kindly fancies swept through the man's mind as he seemed to merge soul and body in his paper.

The carriages, black and glistening in the afternoon sun far down the great evening drive below, were fairly packed in a solid mass from bank to bank of green trees, and as far almost toward the city as the eye could reach. There was a roll and sound as of an inflowing sea.

Far away to the south, and still nearer to the east and the west, the mighty voice of progress, the building, the peopling of a city, rolled and resounded.

The man read on. The child's little dimpled hand had wandered to its own throat, in the absence of other employment, and played with the locket fastened to a gold chain about its neck.

The two chubby hands pulled at the chain until it was buried in the folds about the fat little neck, and the child began to cry.

"Hello, Dollie, Dollie? Dollie, what's your name? What is the matter now?"

The girl's brow grew dark instantly, and taking the child up hastily she went straight away.

Once she turned half around, and looked at the man with such a perplexed and bewildered air that he felt certain her mind was sadly shaken. In fact, from the first he read in her great eyes that reason was doubtful of its throne.

The man greatly feared she would not come back. Yet had he attempted to follow her she would have fled.

Had he even risen from his seat at that moment she would have run away and hidden herself and that patient, silent child in any one of the thousand turns and angles of the deep and delicious paths about them.

Suddenly the girl came back from quite another direction—a moth about a candle. She stood near him a moment, and then impetuously sat down beside him.

"I called her Dollie because they did. When they brought her to me they said it was a doll. That was over yonder on the island."

The girl looked wildly about her, and then leaning forward, she went on hurriedly as she now and then glanced swiftly up and down the tremendous inflowing tide of wealth and splendor.

"You see these people on this big island send people over yonder to that little island when they want to get them away, because there are more of them on the big island than on the little island, and they can do as they please. That is why I was sent there. Oh, it was dreadful—it was dreadful!"

Here the girl pressed her hands upon her eyes, as if to shut the vision from her.

"They sent two women into my cell to watch me. Well, they got to fighting. They were very crazy. Then another woman came. She was kind to me. But what do you think? She was crazy, too. She had been there nine years! And then there was a place there

where they were just awful. They were in iron boxes—long iron boxes with big, strong bars. And these ones had long poles with corn-husks tied on the ends, like mops. They would push these along on the floor all the time. And do you know, after Dollie was sent to me to take care of by—by—by my sister, you know, why, I would not stay there. No, indeed, I wouldn't! I told them it was no place to bring up a child in! And I was right, wasn't I?"

The reporter looked at her kindly, tenderly, pitifully, gently nodded assent, and she went on:

"At last, when they would not let me out, but told me I was crazy, why, I wouldn't eat. Then the food was so bad. And one day I said: 'Look here; if I were to eat that stuff I would be giving you proof enough that I am crazy. No, indeed; I've got too much sense to eat that!' This showed them plain enough that I was not crazy, you see. And then pretty soon they let me out, and they told me to bring Dollie along and keep her till sister came to take her away."

The girl's voice had fallen to a whisper as she hurried on in her wild way, glancing up and down, back and before, as for some one whom she was expecting to see pass. When she stopped, she crowded down in the farther end of the seat, took the child in her arms, and sat very still.

Her dress was threadbare—threadbare as the coat of the man at her side. Her shoes were badly worn. Her face was pale and ashen now. Possibly her face was pale from hunger.

The man with thumb and finger dug out a piece of silver from his vest-pocket and put it in the baby's hand.

"Go and get something to eat yonder and come back."

The girl slowly shook her head. She looked anxiously about. Surely she was waiting for some one.

Horsemen, ladies, too, on horseback, dashed in a dizzy crescent of deep and hanging greenwood around the little hill, close to where they sat. Some of the horses' feet sent the gravel flying and rattling on the iron bench where they were.

The child clapped its chubby hands; but the girl kept her eyes on the great black mass of moving carriages.

About four o'clock in the afternoon, when the great drive was at full tide, and where the horses were finest and fastest, there was a sensation, a buzz and murmur of excitement all along the line and clapping of hands from the crowds that lined the dense and endless crush of carriages.

There sat Stone, the impassive, black and tranquil, cold and bloodless Stone, the great Wall Street speculator and wrecker of railroads. He held his reins with precision, and drove straight ahead and swiftly, with calm and affected unconcern.

Many remarks were passed as the small, black, cold, and constantly shivering speculator passed.

"The Lord filled him with promises," sighed a pastor in rather oily broadcloth, "but the devil filled him with forgetfulness."

A man who sat on an iron bench and heard this, whispered: "That parson has been to Wall Street."

But close after Stone came the richest railroad magnate in the world. He was the hero, the sensation of the day. He was holding tight to his reins with his two big red hands, smiling a vast and massive smile on the crowds. His hands were closed tight—so tight! So close and tight, hard and close and tight constantly and

forever. Hard and tight and close, never to be opened this side the door of death, lest one of the hundred millions might slip from his hand and fall at the feet of the people who deified him for his gold. This was the heart and soul of the great city.

Hours had gone by. The shadows lay long and restful within the park. Some of these shadows seemed sinking into the earth as in a grave. They seemed so tired, ready to lie down forever.

The flock of sheep had moved like a white cloud quite across the green fields and gone to rest. The baby slept, weary, worn, lying in the girl's arms. The man read his paper as before. The girl waited, waited, yet she still kept her great, sad eyes turned upon the stream of inflowing humanity.

Suddenly she sprang to her feet. She forgot the man at her side. She did not see the park officer as he passed. The child asleep in her arms was as a feather in weight to her now. The dashing circle of horsemen were in the way. She hoisted her little charge in her arms and held it high in the air, reaching, leaning, tip-toeing up, her face radiant with love and hope and fear, her glorious eyes glowing with uncommon fire, her whole frame quivering and trembling with a wild delight.

The eyes of a handsome man, in a gorgeous turnout, lifted to the child, then dropped to the linen robe on his knees. It was Matherson. The whip which he had been gayly whirling in the air sank, and the lines relaxed.

It was only a moment. The carriage whirled past; the trees shut them out—the handsome man and the matchless lady at his side—almost instantly; and the girl with the child sank down in her place, more dead than alive.

Then she snatched the chain from the child's neck.

Any other child so suddenly and rudely disturbed in its sleep would have cried out in alarm. This child did not cry at all. It only nestled closer to the beating heart, to be certain it was there. Then it slept again.

This time the man did not try to read his paper. How could he read after seeing the beautiful face of Hattie Lane? And to see her with that man, too! Very miserable was Walton now.

He fell to thinking. He put this and that together, as usual, making a world of romance out of this one single ugly fact. Then he half smiled, sighed, and moved close to the girl. This time she did not leave the seat. She did not even seem displeased.

Now, at last, there was a bond between them; and although she did not understand it, he knew that she would not break it. Both were so miserable.

He loved Hattie Lane. She loved the handsome man at her side in the carriage. The two in the park had each a grief. Why should they not be miserable together?

The girl clutched the broken chain convulsively. The coin which the reporter had given to the child had fallen to the ground. He picked it up and put it in one of the child's closed hands.

"Did you see that beautiful woman, sir?" The girl looked at the reporter and saw that he too was troubled in his heart. But she did not at all suspect the cause. After awhile she continued: "And don't you think she is very, very pretty? Well, she is that man's sister. Yes, he told me so. But oh! she is so proud and cold and hard and cruel. She won't even let him look at me."

"And you know that man?"

"Oh, no, no! And if I did know him, why, I should

hate him !—hate him !—hate him ! Look here ! do you see this ?”

The girl thrust the little chain and locket into his hand. “ Here, take it—take it ! It had a picture in it once. I broke that out. I broke it with my heel last week. You must take this. Take it, I tell you, or I will throw it in the lake yonder, with the swans ! Yes, and I’ll throw your money with it, too. You can’t give me or my child money for nothing, I tell you ! Ah ! I am proud, Dollie and I. Take it !”

The man took the chain as it was almost forced into his hand, but did not speak.

He held the little battered locket and tiny chain, and was then about to put the trinket, unobserved, in his pocket. Instinctively looking to see where the worn little boot heel had crushed the glass, he read there a name—*John Matherson*.

He drew a long breath of relief, of savage satisfaction. Then he arose and said : “ We will go and get something to eat together.”

He made this very prosaic and practical remark with that firmness and precision which people in the girl’s state of mind rarely fail to obey. The girl followed without a word, holding the child to her heart.

As the sun went down in the west, like some great, wicked world on fire, these two people plodded silently out at one of the seven great gates of this great park together.

CHAPTER VII

A BOWMAN AT DINNER

WALTON, the newspaper man, was a bit thoughtful as he walked slowly along that evening from the park with the beautiful waif at his side. His thoughts were of a very practical quality, too.

He looked at the girl, as she led her child, or lifted her in her arms, from under his broad slouch hat, and finally seemed to settle some vexed question very definitely in his mind.

The man had been mechanically clinking two coins together in his pocket as he walked and thought. Once, twice, thrice his hand had left his pocket and wandered up and down into his breast-pocket, his vest-pocket, and finally back to where it started from.

Each time the man had sighed just a little. Each time, too, the quiet girl moving along at his side had half lifted her great, drooping, timid eyes to his with curious inquiry and interest.

The man had sought in vain to find another coin, if ever so small, anywhere about his person. For had he not invited the weary waif and the little child-waif, too, to dine with him? And where could a gentleman take a lady to dine in New York on two coins?

But after he had looked at her a second time carefully, noted her soiled dress, her broken and broadened shoes, and her broad and ancient hat with its despoiled feather, he decided, with evident satisfaction to himself, that he

could not well be expected to take her to a place of any great pretension.

It may be noted here, by way of parenthesis, that the little child was dressed well, even with costly elegance.

One is here reminded of a certain bird in the far frozen north, which tears the feathers from her own breast to make a nest for her young.

This Bohemian had had, only a little time before, three coins in his pocket. One of these, it may be remembered, he had given to the child, and thereby given the girl some pretence for forcing the now hated chain which was worn about the child's neck into his keeping.

The child now held the one silver coin in its chubby little hand—held hard to it, tightly, as if trying to learn the first letter in the alphabet of the one supreme lesson of this gold-getting city.

The man, too, was holding hard to one of the two coins in his pocket. He was resolved to not part with this one coin on any condition whatever. It held a cherished sentiment. It meant ever so much to him. It had been in his pocket full half a year. Many and many a time had this man gone without his dinner, with this coin in his pocket. He had walked many a mile, and many and many for want of a five-cent piece for car fare, clutching all the time this single coin in his pocket.

But it is not so very hard to walk under such circumstances. One is a great deal stronger with the consolation that he has money in hand.

One can even go hungry with comparative impunity with a gold eagle hiding solidly and safely down in the deepest recesses of one's pocket.

One can always talk with stately confidence to his employer, and ask a larger price for his work; can

hold his head a full inch higher on the street, with a solid eagle in his pocket that refuses to fly away.

But there was much more than all this conspiring to keep this golden eagle in the pocket of this reporter. It had a sentiment about it which was sacred.

And this is the little story of it :

Inspired by the beauty, the quiet power, the perfect womanhood and absolute loveliness of Hattie Lane, he had written a little poem. He had written it of her—to her. Yet he had never dared show it to her—to any one. No one but himself knew its source or its secret inspiration.

He had kept it long. It was his heart, his child. Then one day, when desperately poor, he sold it. It was like selling one's child. It brought him twenty dollars. He got this one gold piece. He had turned his love for Hattie Lane into gold ; but not to part with it. He would keep this forever ; it was company for him ; confidence ; a companion at more times and in more ways than you would care to be told, perhaps.

The two entered a small restaurant in silence, the girl following wherever the man led, and keeping her great eyes to the ground. The child had long since quite given out. The man was now carrying the sleeping child in his arms.

A stout German, with a low brow and high cheek-bones, beckoned them far back and out of the way to a little table in the corner.

He did not seem pleased at all to see these doubtful customers. Perhaps he was afraid the child would cry and disturb the boisterous party whose mirth and bursts of laughter near the door seemed to call the attention of passers-by and encourage patronage.

The man seated the girl, gave her the child, sat down

in a shy and quiet way on the opposite side of the table, and taking up the coffee-stained, greasy, and fly-specked bill of fare, began in a pensive and delicate way to see just how far the piece of silver would go.

Fortunately, it was a full silver dollar. But then he must save something to get down-town with. It was something to know that at this hour the elevated road was running at half fare. It would only require five cents. The little child held on to the half dollar firmly, even in its sleep.

The girl was faint from hunger. The man could see this from under his broad hat without looking twice. The baby, too, must eat. Surely it was as hungry even as himself, and that was supposing it to be hungry indeed.

"Chops, twenty-five cents; that makes fifty. Bread, ten cents; that makes seventy. A glass of milk, five cents each; that makes eighty. Soup—a plate of pearl-barley soup for the baby—fifteen cents; glorious! That makes it all only ninety-five cents! Good!"

The man's spirits went up gayly as he ordered the dinner.

When the milk was brought he pushed back his broad hat leisurely; then he took it off and laid it down on a bench at his side.

He did this reverently. It was to him a sort of grace and giving of thanks to God.

His bared head was shapely. His forehead was broad, high, benevolent. There was a suggestion of gray about the temples. He was also getting bald. The man was not handsome at all; and yet he was entirely so. He had a crisp, sandy beard.

He had once said to a fellow scribe that he never yet had had time to shave. Perhaps he had had more time than money.

The girl, still holding the sleeping child in her lap, lifted the milk to her rich lips, half bowed her acknowledgments to her strange companion, and, smiling faintly, touched the glass and set it down. The man drank off his glass almost at a single quaff.

He was now in glorious spirits. He set the heavy glass down with such force on the table that the noise sounded away off to where the stout German with the high cheek-bones and low brow was washing tumblers behind the bar.

He came forward, pushing down his dirty sleeves over his great, fat elbows.

The girl, following the man's example, also drank her cool, refreshing milk, and set down the glass as the fat German with the low brow and high cheek-bones stood there pressing down his sleeve and waiting for his order to fill the glasses.

Suddenly dismay swept over the face of the Bohemian. His sensitive nature was now set all on edge. There was no more comfort for him there. He put out his left hand and half pushed the stout German back out of his way and toward the bar.

There would not be a nickel for the waiter, even, now.

He did not want any more milk.

"Milk is a coarse drink ; don't you think so, Dottie ?"

"Beastly." She had learned this from some of-her would-be English beaux.

"Glad to hear you say so. Here, take away these glasses. And now for the chops and bread—and—and the barley-soup for the baby."

Without even as much as a sigh of impatience, the little child wakened up as the girl bent down her face over her and whispered kindly, lovingly, such words of

tenderness as none but a mother can fashion at such a moment.

Where had the weary little soul of this sweet child wandered to all this time? Had it gone back to God? Gone back to the other side of the great mystery? Crossed the mighty river on whose banks we all lie down to rest when worn and wearied beyond endurance upon this earth?

Ah! mysterious and terrible is death—this going out of the soul to the untold somewhere, this leaving the tired body to never return any more, forever and forever.

But the mystery of sleep is to me still more impressive, awful, miraculous; this coming back of the soul from the untold somewhere is to me far more miraculous than all the dreadful mysteries of death!

I can only conceive that, when very weary, we touch the very shores of the river of death.

I think that when our feet touch the waters of oblivion we are overtaken by what we call sleep.

The soul then leaves the body and goes out on the great river, voyaging up and down, and, maybe, far on toward the other shore; and then, when well rested and refreshed, it comes back to the waiting body by the river brink, possesses it again, and so goes on for another day, with another great lesson of life. And finally, when wearied and worn unto death, the body lies down by this same great river of oblivion, and the soul goes out and on as before; only this time never, never more to return to the toil, the trouble, the hard, hard lesson of life.

Surely the rivers of sleep and of death are the same.

Surely there is a glorious, all-glorious shore on the other side.

And surely that is the reason no one ever comes back who has been so tenfold fortunate as to land there after having been compelled so many times to come back from this same river of dreams and of cool, comfortable death to the dreadful lessons of life.

To see that child eat !

All the wild animal was aroused at the sight and smell of the steaming plate of barley soup. Her eyes blazed with excitement. Her two chubby little hands went everywhere—up and down, and all about, with wild delight. In her excitement she dropped her coin. The man heard it fall under his chair. He would get down on his knees in the sawdust after dinner and pick it up. He was now certain, somehow, that this was the girl's only fortune, her only bed and breakfast. The coin must not be lost.

The chops were delicious—brown, smoking-hot, and on hot plates. A blessing on all good cooks !

It ought to be remembered that the man who first brought Italian opera to this opulent city became a cook, died a cook.

Alexander Dumas was the best cook in a city of cooks. It takes a high order of genius to do a chop justice.

But to these three homeless and helpless human beings here these chops had one great fault : they were small—so dismally small ! The bread, too, was good ; but when they had eaten their chops and bread it seemed that they were just coming to their appetites.

It was with infinite satisfaction that the man saw the child was entirely satisfied. It was so tired, however, so disenchanted, possibly, with this life, that it soon began to wander down to the bank of the river of dreams and sleep.

The man more than once saw it nod its little head and

beckon to the boatman on the great river of oblivion. The boatman came.

And as the girl took the little baby again in her lap, the little soul, leaving a smile behind it, stepped into the boat and sailed away ; songs and white sails, away, away, and away ; sleep and oblivion, angels, green shores, and God !

“ It is eating too much that gives us Americans indigestion,” said Walton, with much show of wisdom and calm judgment, as he pushed back his empty plate.

“ I am not subject to indigestion at all,” replied the girl.

“ You must not put yourself in danger of that dreadful affliction,” said Walton, finally.

“ Oh, I am in no danger.” The girl meant this kindly.

The man hitched about in his seat, and after an awkward pause took up his broad hat, looked at the inside, then at the outside, and finally placed it firmly on his head.

He had much to do, and must be going. The great and influential newspaper, boasting its millions of profits, paying him not nearly enough to keep him the gentleman he was by nature, needed his opinion—an editorial on the mighty events of the day, the singular government of the great city. There was a great strike, talk of riots, rebellion against the hard and lawless government of the great city.

He must be going now.

Suddenly the man turned to the girl with the sleeping child in her arms. Her head was sinking to her breast ; she, too, had beckoned to the boatman on the river of death and of dreams.

“ Where will you sleep ?”

She started a little, tried to smile, but trouble settled down slowly on her beautiful face. Her eyes fell ; she pretended to be looking for the lost coin.

"It is a long walk up from the Custom House. He is there, you know."

"Who?"

"Oh, I—I don't know! There are a good many men down there. I heard a man call it the refuge down there. What is that?"

The poor girl was rambling in her talk, and not quite herself. She drew the child closer to her breast, and went on :

"I walked up from the Custom House, and it was too much ; oh, so far ! The park is good for Dollie. The air is fine there ; but it is a long walk. At first I thought I would never get there. You see, I had to carry Dollie. But when I came to where the streets began one, two, three—it is not so far after that. You can count them off one at a time, and that makes it seem shorter."

"And what were you doing at the Custom House?"

The girl's face flushed with anger. Then it was all white as she twisted a finger in the shower of hair which fell from the child's head down over her arm, and was a long time silent.

But at last she lifted her head, sighed, looked into the man's face, and becoming more confident and calm, she went on nervously : "Well, you see, I have a friend there. I only wanted to see him. But he went out at the other door. Then I knew he would drive with his sister in the park. There the air is good for Dollie, too. That is why I went into the park."

"And you did not have car fare?"

"Why, you see, it was not always this way. After

he—after—I mean I did have work in a paper-box factory ; but if you spoil a box you must pay twice what it is worth. Some of the poor girls get in debt and keep in debt there. I ran away. Then I got work in a cigar place ; that spoils one's fingers. But I did not mind that. There they don't make you pay for spoiled work. They only make you do it over. But the woman who took care of Dollie would drink gin, and I was afraid she might let Dollie get hurt—and—and—”

The girl drew her little charge closer to her heart, and burst into such a flood of tears and sobs that it seemed her heart must break.

The man pretended that the smoke from the back kitchen was hurting his eyes. He went up to the fat man behind the bar to get away from the weeping girl.

Yes, the German with the low brow and high cheek-bones had a bed and a little garret bedroom up-stairs. He also had a wife and many little chubby children almost as ugly as himself.

Could the bed be let for money to this girl and child ?

The German and the man of the newspaper came back to the sobbing girl together. She stopped sobbing, drew the child closer to her breast, and faintly smiled in the face of her friend, looking up through her tears.

“ I am going now. You must stay here. Let me find that coin your child dropped.”

“ But I can't stay here. I—I—it was only half a dollar.”

The man was on his knees in the sawdust, feeling all about. At length he sprang up with something in his hand. He threw this on the table.

“ Here is money—plenty of money. Your wife and your babies, and you, too, must take care of her till I come again. Do you see ? It is a twenty-dollar gold

piece. I will pay all—everything for a while week. She will be rested then. And if I never come back—”

“Way, no, no, no! It was a piece of silver the baby had.”

“It was gold—that! I gave you that for the gold chain about the baby’s neck.”

“And—and is it worth so much to you?”

“Worth so much to me! It is worth ten thousand eagles of gold—yes, worth ten million eagles of gold, for with that chain I will chain him down as never man was chained on this earth.”

And with this the man turned away, shot out the door, and in another moment the dazed girl with the child in her lap saw the rumbling cars overhead gliding down their avenue of air, winding in and out like a mighty serpent with eyes of flame, flying away to some upper world.

CHAPTER VIII.

PORPOISE AND OTHER FISHES.

Off the Battery this sweet and sunny morning a school of dolphins tumbled up the noble bay, racing, revelling, rejoicing, glistening in the sun ; but not a soul about the splendid Battery to look at them or delight in them save an old sailor or two.

In England men seek the sea. The Bay of Naples is not more beautiful than is this scene from the once famous Battery of New York. Yet the people of this city retreat inland. They never see the ocean. The English see nothing else.

But then the English are a nation of sailors. The Neapolitans are a race of fishermen. Perhaps in our perished commerce we read the reason why we turn our backs on this wonderful lookout at the Battery.

We do not love the sea ; let us confess it. Let us no longer affect a love we have not.

The Englishman, the Neapolitan—these have only their sea to love. We have our boundless lands, our mountains, our rivers. We love our land—land out of sight and out of sound of the great, sad sea. We do not love the sea at all.

There is no shame in this. The shame consists in affecting to love it.

Love the sea because the English sailors, the Italian fishermen and others have loved it? You cannot do that. We are lovers of the shore because of our moun-

tains, our vast, roomy lands, where we draw breath and where grandeur inhabits.

Let others love the sea, for it is their inheritance, as the plains, the mountains, mighty forests, are our inheritance.

This deserted Battery—park, benches, all that invites to rest and large diversion as the ships sweep by—looked, as it always looks now, like a deserted garden.

One majestic old gentleman walked up and down near the sea as Walton, in his usual round for intelligence of the world's ways, came by. But his face was not set to the sea. The sun glanced gloriously on a thousand sails. Tall and sombre ships, black with the smoke of a million tons of coal, weary and creaking from thousands of miles of travel, slid by with stately grace.

The sea was silver and gold, but the impressive old gentleman did not look in that direction. He had his rosy face set toward Wall Street.

Soon a little boy came running up. Breathless he thrust a slip of paper in the hand of Mr. Carrol, Sr., and stood waiting for orders.

"Still tumbling! Tell Stone not to get in a panic. Tell him—tell him—tell him to stand like a stone wall!"

"But, sir, he says he must have more margin, sir."

"Margin—margin? How dare he talk to me of margin? Go to Stone, boy, and ask him how much he wants. Tell him, boy, he shall have half a million. Go quick! I—I will wait for you."

The boy shot away like an arrow, as it was just in the turn of three P.M. in Wall Street; and the impressive old gentleman, muttering to himself, "I will wait for you; I will wait for you; but don't know quite where," began to button up his coat and move rapidly on down

toward the Barge Office, so as to be safely out of sight and reach when the boy returned.

"Ah ! Mr. Walton. Glad to encounter you, sah, on this classic and historic spot, sah. I see you appreciate nature, sah, as—as I do. Yes, sah, this is a glorious place for the weary and overworked officers of this great country to find a moment's recreation from their arduous toils. Shake hands, sah, again, sah !"

Once more the two men grappled, and the stout and well-fed office-holder shook the thin newspaper man till his teeth rattled together.

"A writer, sah, a member of the press, sah, is to me, sah, an—an—an object of reverence—I had almost said worship, sah !"

The politician moved on down through the trees toward the Barge Office as fast as he could while he spoke. Once or twice he threw his eye back over his shoulder as if in great fear of the boy with demands for margins from the cold and exacting broker of the Stock Board.

"You are not so busy to-day, Colonel Carrol ?"

"Busy ! busy as a bee, sah. I tell you that the people have no idea of the tremendous duties and responsibilities of us poor, overworked men in the management of this great Government, sah. Say so in your paper, sah—say so in all of your ten papers, sah. And quote General J. J. Carrol as your authority, sah. Why, the people have no idea how we have to work, sah."

With a last furtive look back over his shoulder, the great Carrol puffed himself along till he sank into a seat where he was securely hidden from all possible boys from all possible brokers demanding more margins.

Here, in a most patronizing way, he drew the newspaper man down by his side. Then, slapping the re-

porter's knee familiarly with his heavy, fat hand, he said, as he again lifted the ponderous palm in the air :

"Sah, we here in this single port collect hundreds of millions of dollars, sah. Think of that ! Think of the labor and the responsibility, sah. Why, sah, we collect more money in a single year than would have built twenty Solomon's temples, sah—more than would buy all of Jerusalem to-day, sah !"

"Let us hope you get paid for your labor, General !"

"Moderately—moderately, sah. Very moderately, considering the responsibility, sah !"

"And how many hundred thousand men are engaged in this great and glorious work of collecting revenue at the thousand sea-gates of our great country ?"

"Well, not many hundred thousands, sah."

"And how much of this money does it cost to collect it—I mean counting the time of those who are detained by this awkward machinery, this blockade of business, all the delays ? How much of it ? One half ?"

"Well, sah, maybe one half ; maybe one quarter, sah."

"You are hardly exact or definitely informed for one in your exalted position, General. But I see you wear English clothes."

"Yes, sah ; custom of our family. George Washington, sah, would never wear anything else, sah. Custom of the Carrol family, sah."

"Then you paid for that coat nearly twice as much as you would have paid had we not had our standing army of a hundred thousand men, more or less, eminent politicians like yourself, guarding the great sea-doors, waiting to tax the industries of others from other lands ? You paid a double price for your coat, eh ?"

There was a sly twinkle in the stout old General's eye.

Then he chuckled a little as he said : " Wall, sah, I hardly paid fifty per cent."

" Or forty per cent ?"

" Or forty per cent, sah !"

" Or any per cent, perhaps ?"

" Or any per cent. No ; you see—samples, sah—samples !" And the great man chuckled delightfully.

" That is, ' samples ' are sent as cigars are sent, and you and your friends sample them, and so do not scrutinize too deeply into the industries of those sending these samples to the Custom House ?"

" Not quite that, sah—not quite that ! You see, sah, corruption *will* creep in. Confidentially, sah, the collector is careless. We call it careless. You see, he smokes too much. And, sah, when a man's eyes are full of smoke, why, he can't see at all, sah."

" And so you don't quite like the present collector ?"

" Like him ? He's a blackguard, sah. Say so in your ten papers, sah ; but don't quote General Carrol, sah. No, sah ; the man for the place is Colonel Matherson, sah."

Walton started just a little, fumbled in his vest-pocket for a broken chain and battered locket, lifted them up with his thumb and finger, looked at them an instant as if to be certain they were secure, and then put them back deep in his pocket.

" Yes, sah ; Matherson is the man ; a strong man ; a self-made young man, sah ; a true New Yorker ; and a gentleman, sah ; a perfect gentleman, sah ; just like a real Southerner, sah. You see, I'm Southern. N-o ; didn't exactly take an active part in the wah ; was not in good health ; went to Canada for my health, sah. But, sah, like a true patriot, I surrendered when the wah was over, and came here, took this position of trust, and

served my country faithfully, sah ; a—a reconstructed rebel, sah !”

“ But Matherson ; he is not a fit man. He is not a good man for that high place !”

“ The soul of honor, sah. Why, sah, he is the most perfect gentleman in the city, sah ; and in love—yes, with an empress, sah ; and when he gets this exalted position will marry her, sah.”

“ And her name is—”

“ Hattie Lane, sah. Great in society, sah. Maybe you have heard of her, sah. You reporters know a great deal, sah. But I must be going, sah ; good-day, sah. Glad to have seen you, sah.”

There was a little boy seen entering farther up and on among the trees, and Carrol fled hastily.

Walton did not quite know when the impressive man went away. He must have risen, too, and shaken hands with him instinctively and with that mechanical politeness peculiar to all well-bred men.

But when he came quite to himself he was looking away out over the great bay. He was looking down the sweep of water to the boundless Atlantic.

He was looking steadily, calmly, silently at the great gate which God's hand opened wide to all the world, but which man's hand has shut against his fellow-man.

The porpoises were tumbling in great shoals.

Hattie Lane ! Hattie Lane !

The name rhymed on in his ears. The sun was shining on the sea and on a thousand passing sails. The sun was glittering on the sea. The sun was dancing, sparkling, gleaming. And maybe that was what was the matter with the man's eyes ; for as he turned to go away, he drew his hand hastily across his face, and his fingers were wet with tears.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SHADOW OF A TRAGEDY.

POOR people are more honest in America than rich people—more generous, also. In some cases honesty and generosity together have kept them poor. In too many cases dishonesty has made men rich. But this is not quite the case in old countries.

There the low are too often really low.

I usually lived among the poor when in Europe. But there are ways of finding out refined and honest people even among the lowest of the low on all God's earth.

In Italy I wandered about among the villages of the mountain regions for two years. And when I wanted to find a place to stay, a room in some humble man's house, I would walk about till I found a place with the windows full of flowers.

Here I would take up my abode, and be as safe from insult, suspicion, vulgarity, to say nothing of personal security—which is a small thing—as if in the king's palace.

As Walton and his weary companion had come from the park that evening, he had seen, on looking about for a place to take the tired girl and sleeping child, a pot of red geraniums, growing luxuriantly up in the garret of this little beer-shop. He was too weary for comment then, but this little sign showed almost all he cared to know. It told him that a woman lived there, and that the place was not an unsafe one for a young girl to enter ;

and the thrifty and well-tended flowers also told him that this woman not only had some artistic taste and love of color, but that she was a woman who had sense and sympathy. And it was this assurance which permitted him to leave the girl there for days without any special concern.

As for Dottie, she slept till far into the first half of the new day. She opened her eyes on honest poverty and innocent surroundings, the first, be it confessed, for days—years.

There was a bird singing in the next room. She found many half-clad, chubby children gathered about feeding it, laughing, shouting merrily under their shocks of flaxen hair as they drew on their clothes. The bright red geranium gleamed in the window like a little sunrise.

Little Dollie was fast friends with the children in a moment. They merely widened the circle about the cage. She toddled up, melted in, and became a part of the merry ring at once.

“Oh, I just fit in here!”—that is what poor Dottie said to the German woman who came in, with her hands full of work, and began good-naturedly to set her tumbled children in order; somewhat in the way one would set up tenpins.

The woman did not know the meaning of the honest expression, but she liked the girl's face, and spoke very kindly to the child. This made peace, happiness, love.

“You see we are poor, and we all work. The children are just beginning. They work when not at school. Would you like to work? You can go with me, maybe.”

The great eyes of the strange girl gleamed with delight. The full, pale lips took color, and a smile

showed such a set of pearly teeth as had not been seen for days.

“What do you do?”

“I wear pretty clothes and walk about for one, two, or three hours on a floor with other people. They are good people, some of them. The place is well lighted. You do not need to speak to any one all the evening if you do not choose. They are all very civil. And, then, the music is good. We Germans like music very much. You see this? I am making my own clothes. I get one dollar every evening if I wear their clothes. I get one dollar and a half every evening if I furnish my dresses. I can walk all the way if it is fair. That is nine dollars a week. You see, that makes nearly forty dollars a month.”

The girl came close up to the woman, in her eagerness to hear and learn, to accept her noble friendship.

“They will take you, I know. They will look at your eyes first, then your figure. You have these perfect. You see, they cannot make eyes. They can make complexion, and hair, and teeth even as fine as you have; but they cannot make your eyes.”

The girl clutched at the woman in her delight with her two hands, as if she feared she might escape her.

She had been going down, down, catching here, trying to hold on there, trying to stop, stopping sometimes, even getting a little way up stream sometimes, but only to lose her hold, to be borne away—down, down, down—farther each time than before.

How strange it was to her to hear kind words like these! And then that strange man the night before who brought it all about. Once in the night, when she had awakened for a moment, and thought of the man who had thrown a great piece of gold down before her, and

then disappeared in the darkness, she pinched herself to see if it was really true and she was quite awake.

Then she thought how rich he must be ! She almost hated him then. How she wished that he was poor like herself, so that she might at least be permitted to see him again, to talk to him, to know him, respect—aye, even from afar off, and secretly to love him.

They all breakfasted, a merry group together. A frugal meal it was, but Dottie and Dollie were never so happy in all their two lives.

When the woman had eaten, she left the rosy garden of children, in which Dottie, poor, childlike, and helpless Dottie, was only a larger flower, and went down to tend the bar while her husband, the busy man with the high cheek-bones and low brow, came up and also dispatched his frugal breakfast.

These are the people, or rather the children of such, reared as these children are reared, face to face with poverty and toil, who make this country great.

And so it was that Dottie went to work.

She had never been inside of a theatre before. As the woman who took her with her that evening said they would, they only looked at her eyes, her figure, and her wonderful face.

The next night that knot of lepers, moral and physical lepers, which hovers forever about every stage-door, was doubled in its audacity and numbers. But the German woman led her strange and startled friend safely through all, hastily up toward home, suffering no other harm than a torn sleeve or soiled skirt and a broadside of insults and obscenity such as no other city and no other scene on earth could produce ; but both had become used to this in their respective struggles in the great Gotham.

How happy was Dottie now ! And how grateful and

how good ! She took her child every day into the park. She did not want to be seen now by the man who had so despised her.

For the first few days she kept quite hidden away in the deep woods and tortuous ways, and played, laughed, chatted with the child. It did not take so much to make her happy. It does not take much to make any one happy.

God has put it in your power to rise up at this moment and go forth and make some one human being perfectly, supremely happy. Never forget this.

But woman's curiosity impelled this girl finally to see if he still drove, and drove with the beautiful sister at his side. And so she drew near to the drive one day, and from a sheltered and securely-hidden place watched all the afternoon for a well-known team and carriage. He did not come. She was glad, and took a long breath of satisfaction—she knew not why—as she turned home in the twilight.

Strangely enough, on the next day this same woman's curiosity set her in the same place and for the same purpose. She hoped she would not see him. She felt, too, that she would be a bit unhappy if she did not. She knew she would be entirely wretched if she did.

Suddenly she saw the horses tossing their plumed and tasselled heads, gleaming with silver and gold, above the sea of horses and carriages pouring in and up the wooded way.

The girl held her breath and leaned a little forward. The horses were lifting high their caparisoned heads, plunging and tossing foam from their mouths.

The man did not hold the whip in his hand. He held the reins with but a single hand. As they drew near the girl's face became pale, rigid. As they passed the man's

face was bent down to his companion's, her face turned, lifted to his. It lay against his shoulder.

The face of that regal beauty nestled there, restful, content, radiant with joy, at his side.

"I will kill her!"

That was all that the watcher said. The girl, as she hissed these words through her teeth, caught up the child and fled back deeper into the woods, and so on hastily to her home. Once, twice, thrice, she said between her full, set lips: "I knew, I knew it wasn't his sister. Oh, what a fool I am to believe anybody! I will kill her!"

That evening—it was not quite sunset and a week had not yet passed—Walton came. He found his little friend strangely sad and unhappy. But as he had never seen her otherwise, this did not surprise him at all. He had his pockets full of sweets and toys for the child. The generous little thing was very happy, and gave them all away on the instant to her companions.

Dottie tried hard to be very kind to her strange friend. She made him sit down and eat with her as night came on; for on this evening she need not be early at her work.

The man was more than glad as she told him all her good fortune. And, indeed, she, too, was glad again as she went over all her work to the minutest detail.

And as he listened, now and then making wise and quiet suggestions and comments, and she looked in his careworn and singularly sensitive face, she felt as if he were some being better than all men she had ever known or dreamed of.

She felt a sudden, strange, overwhelming impulse to put out her hand, to take his, to hold it, to press it to her lips; but he seemed too serious, too much in earnest, too full of care and concern for any liberty like that.

But she learned some things from him that made her glad. When he told her how poor he was, and how hard he worked, and how desolate his life was, she suddenly became happy—selfishly, cruelly happy.

It seemed to her now that somehow she had at least half a right to love this man ; and even as she sat there she began to love him.

This impulsive, untrained, half-wild creature began to love this man here as she hated the man whom she had just seen in the park in all his splendid opulence.

It was with a singular bit of satisfaction that she went to the German behind the bar, and returned with a golden eagle. She threw it down on the table, and stood up a moment in mock grandeur, as he had stood that night when they first met ; then she pointed to the coin, and strode toward the door. She was practising her profession, and the man laughed with delight as he looked at her and took up the coin. He turned the coin over and over in his hand as she came and sat down before him. Then, with a sigh, he put it in his pocket. It was the same. There was the same face he had looked at so often and named it Hattie Lane.

What a joy it was to give this man back this same coin ! She felt, too, that she now stood better in his eyes than before. This alone was great happiness.

Then she was afraid he might think she was really good, and innocent, and pure. She would not lie, even in act or deed. Yet she did not dare tell him anything at all of her life, her awful history. But she talked on, talked of many things ; and, finding how well he knew the city, they had many things in common to talk about.

“ There is one park where they do not drive a girl away when she falls to sleep. That is Riverside Park. There are not many policemen there ; but there are so

many tramps that one is afraid to be there alone. I used to go down close to the railroad with Dollie, as close as I could get. That made company for me when the cars passed. Then the tramps would not dare to come so close. Then one time an old man gave me this to keep the tramps away when I told him how they would follow me."

She paused a moment as she held the little black "bulldog" pistol in her small white hand. Both were very quiet for a long time. Neither spoke. Then, leaning forward, still holding the pistol tightly, she said :

"What is the name of that woman we saw riding that day with him?"

There was fire in her eyes, desperation in her fierce, husky, half-articulated words. The man did not answer. Men do not give names in this great city readily. Men do not always give their own names. No man gives the name of the woman he loves to a strange girl like this.

✓ The girl put the small weapon in her pocket. It was so small you could hold it in your hand unseen; but it was a deadly little thing. It was the old-fashioned kind, with the percussion-cap. Through the slit in the half-lifted hammer you could see the bright cap shine like the teeth through a bulldog's lip.

The man looked at this girl with silent dismay, dread, and awe, as she put the pistol back in her pocket and began again to rattle on in a strange, wild, and excited way, recounting these almost incredible facts about herself—her life on the road, in the park, with tramps. Again and all the time this man was calmly balancing facts in his mind, putting this and that together, as before.

"There will be a tragedy some day," he said to himself.

The girl saw that he was thoughtful, troubled. She paused, looked in his face, felt embarrassed, and then, as if in desperation, began again to talk as before ; but she, too, soon fell to thinking.

She had not dared tell him anything of this kind, had she not been induced to it by his own confessions of a similar kind. She was sorry now she had told him anything ; ashamed that she had shown the pistol ; angry with herself.

At last, with a sigh, she made an effort of will, and tried to be good, gentle, lovable. The world had been hard to her ; but now she felt she had a sympathetic friend. She really loved this man after her sudden and impulsive fashion now ; and she wanted his sympathy, his esteem.

She did not want to shock him now and frighten him away. Had they not both suffered enough ? Why, they had starved in the same hard city together.

After all, there is no baptism like that of poverty and brave, patient endurance of it.

This is the one great Church. How many of us belong to it ? Christ was the founder of it. This is the holiest brotherhood, it seems to me.

Who is there that has not suffered ? Only babes, new-born. And who has not suffered and sinned also ? No one is entirely human who has not ; and it is a dreary and loveless soul that has not suffered and sinned also.

CHAPTER X.

A FIFTH AVENUE AFTERNOON.

DOTTIE did not always take the child with her now to the park. She let her go there with the rosy little flock of Germans.

More than once she saw the same scene which so tortured her before. More than once, peering through the wood, her dark eyes flashed hatred on the beautiful blonde lady, nestled down there so supremely happy by the side of the man she hated, as the gorgeous tide of equipages rolled past. Her left hand would part and hold back the thick foliage, her right hand clutch and hold the ugly weapon we have seen before.

One would say that she should have sought to kill the man at her side. It seems to me that had been the most natural thing for her to do, or at least desire to do. But she thought only of killing the beautiful woman.

The girl had come to know the precise moment when they would pass. You order your carriage at a certain hour. It is on the minute. It takes you just precisely so long to reach the park. Your team takes you at precisely the same pace.

There is no mistake about the exact time you will reach and pass any certain point.

Each day this girl had grown bolder and bolder. Each time she had drawn closer and closer to the edge of the road.

Once some ladies saw her crouching in the thick edge

of the wood, and screamed with alarm, she looked so wild, so wicked now, yet so beautiful.

After that the girl was a bit more careful, and changed her place of concealment. Yet she kept close to the drive; so close was she, that at one time the wheels of the carriage in which Hattie Lane sat threw dust on this poor girl's stream of midnight hair as she held back the bushes, leaned forth, her pale lips parted, a pistol clutched in her hand.

This little circumstance seemed to settle all doubt and delay. She decided that the next day should be the last.

Strangely enough, it was a great relief to her—this resolve. She drew in a long breath as she turned home that afternoon.

She was almost happy as she went to her work that night. She greeted Walton—who had gradually, by some way or other, come to be with her a great deal now and to walk home with her from the theatre—with a kindness and cordiality that night which he had not known from her before.

She even leaned on his arm with affection and trust. She spoke of the little child with womanly tenderness and concern. He was certain he had never seen Dottie so gentle, so quiet, good, and entirely lovely.

He said kind things to her; she stored them in her heart as a miser might hoard precious jewels.

She loved this man at her side truly and well. With murder in her heart she had love in her heart also. Side by side in the same chamber slept hate and love—murder and adoration.

The next day she took her place in the wood. She waited. She knew the moment the pretty, happy, beautiful, innocent lady would appear.

The day was cold, and the girl shivered; but she

stood there, bold, steady, still, watching down the way for Hattie Lane.

She did not come, and the girl, half wild and crazed, rose up and walked down toward the city, as if she would meet the tardy carriage and bring things instantly to a crisis. She still clutched the pistol.

But she did not meet the carriage at all. Of all the thousands, this one did not come.

She stood on the edge of the park, and peered far-down the avenue.

Dimly in the distance she saw an awning stretched out across the wide and crowded pavement. The place was black with people. The avenue at this place was packed with carriages. It flashed across the girl's mind immediately.

Was it a wedding? Was she to be married? Maybe it was but an ordinary reception. It seemed to be just the place where the object of her vengeance was to be found. She felt this; she knew this.

She was so certain of this, that she went straight home and put on her best attire: a wild, strange dress it was, made up mostly of her outfit for the theatre. And yet they were not entirely out of taste or in any way in too sharp contrast with some of the dresses seen at the great fashionable gatherings on Fifth Avenue. With such hair, such eyes, such teeth, complexion, and-presence, what apparel need she have had to open all doors, subdue all hearts?

In the ordinary New York hall, born of the most vicious style of architecture ever seen since the savages gave up this island, you are fired like a wad shot out of the muzzle of a gun.

Out of this dark, narrow, hideous hall you are shot into the full glare of gaslight right at the head of the

short, fat hostess, with red face and arms, nursing a hideous bouquet, with the stems of the poor flowers tied tight with wires.

There is a hideous brass band in your ears ; the glass glares in your eyes ; the popping of champagne in the rear appeals to you to escape all this barbarism by pouring in there with the crowd of red-faced and reckless women pouring down wine and getting drunk—drunk as the others are drunk. But this house, around which so many carriages clustered this afternoon, and from which the great awnings stretched over the broad pavement to welcome the quiet comers, was no ordinary house.

It was new, noble in its appointments. The vast, round, roomy hall was of Moorish fashion, and at first glance seemed to be mounted and inlaid with soft, hammered copper. There was no crowding, no haste. The people coming here and there took time to be polite. There was no noise.

For savages did not have possession of this hall. There was no brass band, suggesting the possibility of a war-dance as the day wore on.

There was room here for guests to melt gradually and unobserved away into waiting-rooms, and appear finally in all their splendor a moment later before the unobtrusive hostess in the deep glory of the heart of the house.

You heard only a murmur of voices here. Shoddy was here—she is indeed everywhere—but she was awed into silence now. She could not talk of the things talked of here. It was to her as if the people spoke in a strange tongue. The names of beautiful and antique things were new to her. She could not pronounce them. She could not place them. She could not remember them when she got home. She did not like this language. She rarely came a second time.

Art draws her own lines. They seem soft, delicate, hardly to be observed at first ; but they are hard as steel, impassable as the gulf to the coarse, insolent, and vulgar.

You were not fired into this paradise at the sound of a brass band and the popping of corks : you rather melted into it. If you, by nature, or birth, or breeding, belonged there, you became a part of it. From this great, generous Moorish hall you came to something more generous, subdued, glorious. You proceeded tranquilly, silently, from a little fairyland to a larger fairyland.

Here was a glowing fireplace. The smell of burning oak—the incense of our land—blended sweetly with the restful odors of the Orient. The sickening smell and offensive display of sickly flowers entirely out of season was absent.

It is absurd to copy past styles, unless we can also copy the conditions under which they flourished. In our country fireplaces should be in every house and nearly every room—they are beautiful, because they are harmonious to our needs—but flowers and fireplaces in the same apartment are discordant.

Here the guests were not all in full view, but hidden, or partly hidden. They seemed to appear and disappear. The dado of this room was of *répoussé* work in copper of conventional design. The mural work was of Cordova leather, fastened with large, flat-headed nails of curiously wrought arabesque design, placed on the leather singly and sometimes in irregular masses.

The not notably high ceiling had the appearance of a thin metal sheet, also fastened with nail-heads in antique designs. Every hue of bronze, brass, gold, silver, and copper was employed in the decoration.

The woodwork was dark and rather plain. The fur-

niture was of teak and other dark woods, all carved and of elegant and substantial form.

Springing from the floor and up through designs in bronze or marble, singly and in groups, tall trees of gas lit up the place with unobtrusive splendor.

The soft light lay on the walls, so that they glittered and sparkled with a brilliant but subdued radiance of a thousand hues, while on the ceiling, the floor, the drapery, and statuary it fell but dimly, dreamful, restful.

In this light the few and rare pictures seemed to stand out from the wall to await you, to welcome you.

Heavy curtains, with open-work metal disks, so that when they were touched or pushed to and fro the metals clashed quietly, and yielded their soft musical melody to the sense, draped the alcoves. Over the floor dark and brown and amber-colored silken Persian rugs were strewn in studied carelessness.

In the midst of all this modest display of splendid taste stood for a moment, like a great animal in a strange field, the mighty millionaire, with the vast smile and the two big and tightly-closed hands; but he did not remain long. He could not talk the language spoken here.

And Stone, the great wrecker of railroads, came also; but he, too, nervous, uneasy, and out of place, soon disappeared. As he went out another of his class observed to another man, both out of place and of the same order of character and intellect: "They say he drinks—drinks on the sly."

"Yes," answered the other; "drinks men's blood."

"That, perhaps, is because he has no blood of his own."

Both these men had met him in Wall Street.

There was a rustle, a soft sound, a murmur made by

all insensate things, as if in admiration. Everything eloquently spoke the name :

“ Hattie Lane ! ”

She stood, half leaning, speaking only with her perfect presence, as if she, she only, and not another, was the mistress here ; as if she had been born here, had been here always, and would never go away.

Her dress, without a single gem or jewel, seemed to be a part of the perfection around her. And if the little bells, bronzes, marbles—all things, broke out in an audible murmur of admiration as she came, what less, or more, could man or woman do when she stood before them ?

The guests rose to their feet in a body. Some came forward with the hostess to receive her in silent eloquence of admiration. They saw, heard only her. They did not hear the cry of hate that came from a half-concealed face.

Some one had stolen in and hidden away unseen in the heavy hangings.

Walton came forward last, alone.

There is a weird fabric made in India, and used principally in Siam ; it is black, with gold threads run through it, and has no design. It seems a brilliant gold under certain lights, in others it is simply plain black. In other lights a wave of sunlight seems to run down and up and over its surface ; and under quick movements the threads shoot out like flashes of fire. It is a mysterious, passionate fabric, capable of expressing many of the emotions of the wearer. Sometimes it takes that profound ruby tone which makes all one's color-sense swim—a sort of *hasheesh* of color.

This lady's dress, the body of it, was this. A pointed neck, back and front, was thinly filled with the flimsiest

Chantilly lace. Her hair of gold—heaps and heaps of old gold, shone above this sombre dress, a halo—her only jewel.

Do you know why the classic Greek dress was so good and helpful in making people beautiful? Because in form it was completely negative; because it depended for its character entirely upon that of the wearer, and so it became, to a very great degree, part of the expression of the individual.

We express our characters, our emotions, our culture, more through gestures, attitudes, than through any other avenue of expression. Well, the Greek costume being without form, as near as a straight piece of cloth can be, accepted that of the wearer, and changed with every change of the wearer; so it was more than a mere covering, and more than merely being unobstructive to movement of all kinds. Its many folds, by following, doubled and redoubled each gesture of the wearer, and so added force, and grace, and color to each expression.

The modern dress is built. It is positive, dogmatic. It has a most assertive and ugly form, which it refuses to yield to that of the wearer; but, on the contrary, so insistent is it of itself, that it obliges the form of the wearer to assume its hideous outlines. It has more to do with making women awkward and inexpressive than any other dozen causes; it has made them prisoners, and so has closed the avenue of expressive motions that women have no longer free and plastic bodies, able to express their natures, souls. It has made them merely conventional beings, with imprisoned, dead, and dying bodies, grotesque and deformed.

As Hattie Lane stood there, the real queen and centre of the place, the city, if not of the world of society—stood there only a moment—the soft light making a halo

of more than gold and glory about her splendor of hair, and her gracefully-fashioned Greek face and perfect Greek figure, so perfectly clad—there was a wild cry of pain, of terror.

The little metallic tassels gave out a sharp and angry sound, as a dark and terrible beauty of another type stood before her.

Only these two women were there. Men and women were all about; but only these two women possessed that place.

✓ Dottie's midnight of hair was tossed all about her. Her eyes were flame. Her face was ashen pale.

Her black immensity of hair was wild, and blew about as clouds in a terrible storm.

The right hand sprang in air, and then fell on a level with the beautiful, passive face before her. Another instant, and all would be over.

Walton sprang between, put down the deadly weapon, and looked the strange, wild girl in the face.

"You here! You? Why, I'm sorry, then, and will go. I—I—no! I will kill her!"

Again the pistol was in the air. All was so sudden, that even yet no one knew what was about to happen. People do not take in such situations instantly or comprehend them.

The man seized her hand, and held her back by main force. But she was so wild, so desperate and determined, that the girl was soon the master, in her madness.

Dashing him aside, the dark, wild beauty was once more before the calm and wonderful woman, whose very beauty only made her rival more desperate.

"I will kill her!"

"No, no, Dottie! No!"

"And why shall I not kill her?"

"Because—because," gasped the man, as he struggled with the maniac—"because—because—I love her!"

The dark and mysterious girl staggered back to her place where she had been hiding. Her head sank on her breast. Something was heard to fall heavily to the floor from her hand. The world swam around her; and an instant more and she, too, fell heavily, as one dead in body and in soul.

CHAPTER XI.

"PROTECTION."

EVERYTHING passes. Youth is not well aware of this. It is a truth taught only in the school of experience. And so it is youth revels in delight, as if all things would last forever.

But we who have known both joy and pain, youth and age, know that joy and pain pass as the seasons pass; and knowing this, we come to bear both with moderation.

And "Dot," even in childhood, had learned this lesson. What is so sad as an old child?

One would have said that the spell of insanity which had driven her to attempt the life of Hattie Lane, the long strain, the pain, mental and physical, which such a state of mind meant, would have destroyed her. And maybe it had killed her but for the bitter experience, her long suffering, the long, long array and succession of nights, with all the days blotted out from between them, which she had known.

She had become used to trouble, and sorrow, and shame. It was nothing terrible now. There was nothing terrible any more. She had come to know that the longest nights and the darkest ones were the kindest. They shut out the sight of ugly things. She had come to be as a wild beast that loves darkness.

Of course she did not reason in this way, or reason at all. She groped about in the darkness that enveloped her at this time by the dim light of a sort of animal in-

instinct, which guides with more precision even than the clearest reason.

God is not far away.

After the sudden and confused event in the Moorish rooms on Fifth Avenue she soon recovered her senses, arose, and, with the friendly protection of Walton to guide her to the entrance, passed out, calmly, quietly, not looking back, before, or right or left.

She went directly to the little house by the park, with the red geranium in the window, and climbed the steep, narrow little stairs to her room.

The child was in the park at play with her little German companions.

The brilliant assemblage on the avenue, where Hattie Lane stood silently in its centre, an acknowledged queen by authority of pre-eminent beauty and gracious bearing, had not been at all disturbed, as before indicated, by the appearance and desperate behavior of the poor girl—almost in their midst.

Few saw her. Fewer still knew that anything unusual had happened. And then ugly events like this do not always get to the press.

One comes to believe, from the murmurs of society, that reporters are as merciless as they are omnipresent; that because they are ubiquitous nothing that is cruel or malicious is permitted to escape them.

From the many complaints and hard words uttered against the gatherer of news, we are made to believe that these men, the reporters, are the most formidable of foes to society, the destroyers of all the rules that hedge about the hearthstone, the profaners of all sanctities.

Never was there such a mistaken impression. If society has nothing to tell to the world the reporter is

the last man to tell it, no matter what has happened at its hearthstone.

I have heard different leaders of society complain and bitterly abuse the reporters for publishing their movements to the world. And yet I happen to know that, as a rule, these same people furnish the press all, and more than all, that is said of them.

Dinners are given, receptions held, the presence of the reporters hoped and prayed for, and all the details furnished him, if he comes, by fond mammas, who, the very next day of the announcements, denounce the press most bitterly for publishing their secret doings to the cold, unfeeling world.

But we who know New York "society," the machines, the shams of this new, sudden Jonah's gourd and mushroom civilization of the wonderful city, know right well that nothing is so dear to the leaders of it as the publication of their every movement, act, utterance. And we know as well how sacred are the ill-omened and inauspicious incidents, such as we have seen in the great Moorish chambers on opulent Fifth Avenue.

* * * * *

When Dottie descended from her little room, with the geranium in the window looking out over the beautiful park, she had a little bundle in her hand. She stopped at the counter, and, without attracting any particular attention, as her week was due, paid her bill to the last cent.

The honest German, who was busy handing out beer to a long string of clay-stained laborers, did not quite get at any definite notion of what the girl was doing or where she was going with the little bundle in her left hand.

When eagerly asked and asked, again and again, by

Walton, when he came to seek her soon after, he said he had but a dim notion of what she was about ; that he took the money mechanically, and thought that she might be going to the theatre with her little bundle, or maybe to some dressmaker to have her wardrobe changed or altered. Certainly he had no notion that he would never see her sweet face any more.

Once safely out of the house, she almost ran. She soon reached one of the great gates of the park, entered hastily, and looking eagerly about for her child, and not seeing her, she disappeared up one of the many cool paths in search of her.

The girl had not shed a tear. Her large, burning eyes were dry, dry as flame. Her lips were dry. Her great, full, ruby lips were dry, and drawn, and colorless.

Her hair was falling down about her face. But she did not know this ; she did not notice it till just now, when she stopped at a crossing of the path, and peered through the overhanging trees and bushes for her child.

She pushed it back, brushed it aside from her great, lovely eyes, so that she could see more clearly.

But she had not time to fasten it up again. It was coming down on her like a mantle, like a widow's veil, as one in the deepest mourning. Night was coming down upon her—mental, moral, physical night.

She had scarcely spoken all day. Yet now, as she hastened on, throwing back her hair, leaning and looking forward, now peering through the trees, she heard all the time ringing in her ears, stinging her soul, rasping like rusty iron, his hard, selfish, hopeless words in answer to her cry : “ Why shall I not kill her ? ” “ Because—because I love her ! ”

Once she suddenly stopped in her dazed search in the park, stopped short, and stood up straight and strong.

"Why, that is just the reason I should have killed her! Why didn't I do it? I'll—" She lifted up her two little hands, and looked at them helplessly.

They were empty now. And so, with a great sigh, that shook her shock of hair still lower about her shoulders, she hastened on still deeper in the woods.

In a sudden turn of the path in this beautifully-ordered park, so full of sweet surprises, she came upon a little clearing in the deep wood.

On the edge of this, under the weeping-willows, wound a little rivulet. Lilies grew on the bank of it, and it had little pools or bays here and there along its bank.

The shadows lay deep and cool over the group of children, playing peacefully, almost silently, by the water.

They were watching a little boat which they had made out of a fallen last-year's leaf from one of the oaks. In the midst of this group of fair-haired Saxon children was the dark and rapturous little Dollie, watching the boat with her deep, wonderful eyes, seeing her own beauty in the water.

All the mother's heart rose up in the frenzied girl now; and it was such a relief! The intense clutching and grasping of the poor little hands relaxed. The lips were less drawn. They took back a little something of their color again.

Even the black abundance of her hair had something less terrible and savage in it now, and she sank into a bench at the side of the path, a better woman than she had been for a long, long time, at the sight of the little innocent at play in the cool peace and rest of the park.

She was glad she had not been discovered by the happy

little people with the little ship made from the brown leaf.

She laid her bundle down, and with her two hands she hastily arranged and bound up her massive tempest of hair. She rested then and smiled. Then seeing her bundle at her feet, she started. She remembered that she was homeless, shelterless now, and saw with a sigh that night was upon her.

She lifted the bundle up, laid it back behind the bench in the deep grass, drew some boughs and grasses about it, and, going hastily forward, took the child by the hand, and without a word hastened away.

Another child would have remonstrated, even cried out. This one had learned to obey, to follow on and on and on and on, with a vague terror in her heart, wherever her mother led. She soon took up the bundle.

The children with the boat were very busy with their ship and its curious little passengers.

One of these passengers was a little black ant, that was not at all satisfied with the voyage, and was all the time trying to get ashore. This interested them greatly.

Then they had also caught a very small butterfly, and almost killed it in doing so. It lay helplessly in the bottom of the boat. The ship was filling with water.

It had struck the edge of the current, and was eddying about swiftly.

The poor little butterfly prisoner was in the water. It was a moment of intense excitement.

When the boat had been borne away with the current, after striking a tall spear of grass, where the black ant climbed out, and became a sort of Robinson Crusoe, to the great satisfaction of the children, they looked up for Dollie. Child and mother had both disappeared, and, half frightened, they hastened to return home.

"The guilty fleeth when no man pursueth ; but the righteous man he is bold as a lion."

It is not certain that the girl had any real apprehension of arrest at all in the beginning of her flight. It was only that insensible, irresistible desire which overtakes us at times to escape.

To escape from what ? Ourselves, the wretchedness that is in us. And even the best of us, when the best that is in us only has expression, if over-weary and over-worn from some long and intense trial or concern—ah ! we too often desire to fly away, to escape from every human being.

" Oh, that I had the wings of a dove to fly away and be at rest !"

As she pushed on through the park toward the south side, having a vague notion that she should seek out the lower and hard haunts of the city and hide there, the shadows lay dark and hung heavily across her path. People passed hurriedly. They, too, seemed to have in their hearts some sort of desire to escape.

Some of these hurrying people stopped suddenly as they met her or crossed her path and looked at her for a moment intently.

She did not suspect that it was her unconscious beauty, her abundance of hair, and the large, lifted eyes of the silent, pitiful child hurrying on tiptoe at her side, as she almost ran, holding Dollie tight and hard by the hand.

She began now to have a definite fear. This fear grew and deepened as night gathered about her and the shadows grew deeper. She saw an officer of the park at length coming down the path on his round of duty. Then she turned sharply and ran.

The officer followed.

She caught up the child and ran with all her might. Had she at this moment found one of the many little lakes of the park in her path, she would have plunged into it and hidden away in its waters. Finally she came to the open avenue to the east. She was surprised, stunned. She would have turned about, and buried herself once more in the woods, but the officer, she knew, was close behind her.

With the child still in her arms she crossed the avenue, and hurried on down Sixtieth Street toward the river. Finally she stopped, out of breath, nearly ready to fall, and ventured to turn and look back.

She caught in her breath, and a great sigh of relief came from her panting breast.

The officer was standing quietly on the edge of the wood, looking curiously after her, with no purpose of pursuit in his indifferent attitude.

A few steps farther brought her to a vacant lot, where she sat down and tried to rest. The child nestled up against the dusty skirt of her mother's dress, and lay there like a little, panting, tired, homeless dog at her feet, looking up in her face with her great, plaintive eyes inquiringly, not daring to say one word.

The mother gathered up her own long hair a little once more as she sat there, feeling more forlorn and more entirely miserable than she had ever felt in her life.

The reaction of the past few wretched days was coming on with terrible penalty. She began to be haunted by fear, and most terribly now.

She had a conviction that the stage-entrance to the theatre would be watched by an innumerable and desperate force of detectives. She felt certain that the little window with the red geranium would be watched for a week. She fancied, believed that Matherson had

tried more than once, and in many ways, to dispose of her entirely and sweep her out of his path ; that now he would take this occasion to accomplish his desire.

For one so weak, mentally and physically, she made her plans of flight with some precision. Wild beasts when followed fly to the densest of their thickets.

Man does much the same ; for man at such times is a beast.

This girl had worked in a paper-box factory in the lower and thickly populated part of the city. She had also tried to make cigarettes, but she had never been able to get on there quite. She lived on but little, yet that little she had found it impossible to earn.

She had a vague recollection of a couple of rather polite and very pompous old gentlemen who used to come about quietly among the girls and levy little assessments to help the political party of "Protection." She had given a little money for this more than once. It was very, very little, but she had given that little freely ; for that word seemed to her to mean so much—Protection !

She imagined herself once more pursued, as when she first entered the great city, and so needed "protection." She had a dim notion that this money these courteous old political assessors got from the ten thousand laborers engaged in the many kinds of factories smoking in that miserable part of the city might protect her—help her. She thought this money was given to protect helpless girls in her condition of that first fearful night.

You see, the fires of that first agonizing night when she first entered New York had burned away the supports of her bewildered brain. On this subject she was certainly mad. The idea of being so persistently, so incessantly pursued had never quite forsaken her after that

first night. It was the one dream that was forever starting her in her sleep.

And now it seemed to her that it was all to be gone over again in reality. Protection !

The girl remembered a little place up a narrow alley that seemed quite hidden out of sight of all. She had once when ill visited another girl there from the paper-box factory, and spent a week with her there ; and she now remembered with satisfaction that she had never in all that time seen a policeman come to the door of that house.

She would go there. Protection !

She arose ; started. An officer was coming from the park. It was nearly dark and the night was chill.

But, catching up her child, she was soon flying down the street wildly toward the elevated-railroad station, the one place of all the world before her. She sprang up the steps, child in arms, as if she were unincumbered. She looked back from the top of the stairs, and the officer was a block away. It was with infinite comfort that she paid her fare, stepped unquestioned into the car, felt it glide away, and then nestled down in a corner, with her baby in her arms.

She was safe, and no one came to molest her. The car was empty, going down-town at this hour, and she felt that she certainly should escape. She took her baby more closely in her lap at last, and petted it and fondled it.

After a swift, sweet and restful ride she got out, descended, and came to the narrow, dirty, old but familiar street. It was quite dark here, as she hurriedly pushed up the crowded way toward the alley where her friend and fellow-laborer had lived.

Some great, noisy, fat and red-faced policemen of

enormous size stood on the sidewalks and corners, swinging their clubs leisurely and looking sharp in the eyes of every one as they passed.

They looked at her till she was terrified, and once more almost broke into a run. One policeman followed her leisurely. She looked back as she turned sharply up the alley and saw that he had stopped and was looking after her. Another came up, and the two talked together.

One of the two big and brutal-looking officers lifted his club, and pointing it after her, seemed to shake it suggestively. She was certain she had been discovered, that all the city knew she had attempted to commit a murder, and that she should be arrested and sent to a place more terrible than the asylum on the Island.

The door was open, as are the doors of all these miserable dens, caves, cages, down there at night, where misery hides away from the light of the sun by day and the face of man by night, and the girl entered with a beating heart. She bounded up the dark steps like a wild goat on the crags, even with the child in her arms. Fear was behind her.

The poor and miserable are the only people who are really good to the poor and miserable.

The girl here in the top of the house had gone to bed. The door was not fastened, because there was nothing to fasten it with. Locks and keys are luxuries.

" Save me ! save me ! They are after me. I tried to kill that woman, and they are after me ! " gasped the terrified girl, as she threw herself across the hard mattress on two boxes, where lay the tired and worn-out figure of the factory-hand.

It was nothing new, this flying from the face of man, to the bit of humanity there. The weary factory-girl opened her eyes, rose up, closed the door tightly, and

placed the two boxes and the mattress as noiselessly as possible hard against the door.

She put her finger to her lips, and then, without one word, took up the little child, undressed it, and laid it in her place in the bed. Then the two sat there, silent in the dark together, listening, listening.

The child started, sat up in bed, and began to cry for water.

The startled mother sprang up, stood over her in a savage, menacing manner, and hissed out: "Do you want me to kill you?"

"No, no, no."

"Then lie down, or I will kill you."

The desperation of whispered word and nervous action told the dreadful tension to which the poor creature's nerves were strung.

The child did not answer. You might have seen its little chin quiver, the eyes flood with tears, but she hid down there, and did not even dare to sob or sigh, and was soon fast asleep.

"I am dying for water, too," whispered the poor mother.

Not a word did her companion speak, but, taking an old can that had been cut and hammered into a cup, she drew back the boxes a few inches, and wedged her thin way through and out, as she passed on down the half-dozen flights of dirty stairs.

Once in the basement, where the water ran for the whole supply of the hundreds hidden away in this miserable place, she could not forbear looking out, listening to see if any one was watching the house.

She saw a broad hat move out from the mouth of the alley, and look up and down the street. She hurried to the front door, which was on a level with the street, and

hastily closed it. She listened a long time, but the man, whether a detective or not, did not come.

She thought of the thirsty girl up-stairs.

As she turned and hastened up the stairs she felt, or rather heard, the door open behind her. Then she felt, or heard, some one following her in the dark. She increased her speed, and fairly bounded up the steps. This only made the pursuer seem more alert.

Once she stopped, turned, and felt possessed with a quick desire to grapple with this man, this some one, in the dark, grasp him by the throat, and so leap down, down, down.

She would save herself by killing herself and the detective together; but then, after a moment, she turned about and sped up the steps as swiftly as before. He was close to her heels as she came to her door.

She passed in hastily, and attempted to close the door behind her.

But too late! A huge arm was thrust in through the opening. The man's body followed.

The two girls fell back in the darkness together, the child still sleeping soundly. The two terrified girls clasped hands and tremblingly waited.

They did not have to wait long; and yet they waited years.

The only instrument that ever measured time correctly is the human heart.

They could hear the man breathing, as he stood there in the door facing them. They heard him fumbling in his pocket among the keys and pencils and the like, as if for a match-box.

Dottie's distorted fears conjured these things she heard rattling to be manacles and chains for her. Then there was the scratching of a match.

Then the light leapt out, full blown instantly, and filled the room.

The man held the match high up over his head with his left hand, and with his right pushed back the broad slouch hat from a patient, kindly face and ample brow.

It was her dearest friend in this world, gentle, unselfish old Joe Walton, the reporter.

CHAPTER XII.

DOWN-TOWN.

THE smile left the plain, honest face of Walton as he stood there in the half-open door, holding up the wax match above his head, as he saw the two girls huddled together back in the corner of the wretched room, and pale with terror.

But his presence of mind did not forsake him. A little tin lamp sat on the single wooden chair by the side of the door. He stooped, touched the expiring match to the wick, and went on talking quietly, and as if entirely unconcerned.

He took out the little greasy lamp, and sat down on a corner of one of the boxes.

"You see, I had to come down-town, anyway, to report the grand afternoon party to my paper, and I thought I would call and see you, as I was so near. I have heard you speak of her often."

The man motioned with the lamp to the pale, thin girl, who now half leaned against the wall in the corner, as he set the lamp down on a rickety table a little-farther along from the door, and wiped his fingers on a lifted shoe.

"Oh, yes, I know this place well. I have been sent to a good many houses like this to write about them; but the papers won't publish all the facts, because, you see, rich men own these miserable places, and they don't want them pulled down, as they should be. They are all in-

sured heavily, and they wait for them to burn down. Then they get the insurance. Sometimes they fall down, however, before they are burned down."

The two girls relaxed their hold of each other's hands, and came a little forward.

One of them gradually settled down on a corner of one of the boxes. The child still lay on the mattress asleep. The other girl leaned on the little table where sat the flaring lamp, as the man quietly went on addressing Dottie.

"But you should not have left the other place so soon, at least not without your dinner." And here he began to draw something from his spacious coat-pockets, and lay it on the table before the large and wondering eyes of the silent girl. "I knew you would be hungry, and—and—" the man leaned over to one side, and toyed at something deep down in his pocket, and finally brought it forth with a flourish—"and thirsty, too."

He held a cool, dripping bottle of soda water high in the air, waved it about, and snapped off the cork with a report that startled the two timid girls.

It broke their silence and sadness; and, glancing at each other, they laughed outright and heartily.

"Ah! here is a glass, or, what is better than a glass, for it will hold more, a can just made for the purpose."

And pouring out the water which the pale, thin girl had brought up a moment before into a bucket at hand, he emptied the cold, sparkling soda into the can with a guzzling sound, that seemed to be almost an echo of the girlish laughter, and with another flourish he held it up before the lips that had not yet spoken.

And then the thin, pale factory-girl shared the remaining half.

Oh, the pleasure, the joy of a cool draught when one is thirsty, dying of thirst!

You who have never seen deserts, scorching sands, and burning suns—seen father, mother, brother, friends—all falling down as if dead for water, and then suddenly found the cool rock in the desert bursting forth with sweet waters—waters that talked to you, laughed in your face, rippled at your feet—have not yet felt the force of that simple promise in words not unlike these: "He who gives one of these little ones a cup of cold water in my name shall inherit heaven."

Their lips were suddenly unsealed now. They ate and they talked like reasonable human beings, these two terrified creatures of half an hour before, and the world was surely another world to them.

"Yes, business is slack with me now," the pale, thin one said.

"Business is slack!"

It is an old and familiar expression among the poor of the factories from one year's end to the other. The shopkeeper hears it a hundred times a day. It is an expression which answers for all occasions. If one has been sick, idle, drunk, this is the one sad and simple expression which the rent-man, the gas-man, the grocery-man—all hear, week in and week out: "Business has been slack with me!"

"But it will be better when the summer is over," the pale girl said, with a hopeful lift of her face.

You see the poor are permitted to hope. —

Aye—thank God for it—to hope even against hope.

Her brother who lived with her was a printer. He was on a strike, she said; a "lock-out" she called it. The man, who had sharpened a pencil and was dotting down some fact or fancy which seemed to strike him as the girl talked on, only nodded his head here.

He made a mental note, however, and for "strike"

wrote "drunk." For "lock-out" he wrote "lock-up."

And little wonder ! What else in the midst of all this misery ? Why will cities always and forever put all their parks, and all their fountains, and all their pleasant places miles and miles away from the homes and places of employment of the poor, of the only people who want them, need them, when they have never either the time or the money to reach them ?

As for herself ; yes, she had been offered a chance to go to the seaside. But, you see, her clothes were not fit. She had been out of work so long. Business had been slack with her !

"But these good ladies who offered you this chance to go to the seaside don't ask you to dress up ?"

"Listen to me, mister. I reckon they do. I reckon when a fine lady fixes up a cottage, and fills it with girls, she wants 'em to look spruce and clean and Sunday-schooly. Oh, don't shake your head ; I know they do ! One of our girls in the factory went once. And the woman with the cottage brought people there to see them every day, she did. And she brought preachers, lots of preachers, that all the time wanted to talk to them about their sins. Well, it just made Liz sick. And Liz—that's the one that went—Liz said that they jest kept her bobbin' up and down all the time to show off her good manners and improved style. She came back thin as a tobacker stem and almost as brown. And so, mister, I didn't much care to go anyhow, you see."

"Speaking of tobacco"—the man stopped driving his pencil with nervous rapidity over the note-book, and looked up—"speaking of tobacco, and seeing your business is slack, I think I can get you work."

The pale, thin girl came up close and eager. "Yes,"

the man continued; "I know a place where they let out tobacco. But you will have to put up for the tobacco."

The girl instinctively fell back a little, and was just about to say she did not think she would particularly like to handle tobacco; she was going to say it was not good for her health, her hands, the complexion—anything. For, be it observed here, the good God has left the poor one thing more besides hope—that is pride.

"Yes, you will have to put up for the tobacco, and I will put up for you." The girl still stood aloof; her two hands were locked together, and held low down before her. "You can pay me back the first week, both of you." He nodded to the large-eyed girl who stood further away. She too came up closer, and stood at the side of her hospitable friend. "Yes, and you will have to put up only for the first week; after that your character will be enough. They will take your word after the work is returned all right for the first week."

Two faces were radiant. There was so much happiness in that little dingy old house, that the one room could hardly contain it.

And that happiness overflowed in laughter and merriment not a moment after, and literally filled the dark and dismal old hall without, as the man went on in a merry way with his plans for the two girls and the child asleep in the arms of Mercy. The man came back to say: "Why, yes; you can bring the tobacco up here. You can sit by this window, where the light is good and the air is good, because it is so near to heaven; and there is plenty of room for two of you—for three. Then the brother can come, you see, and let the 'lock-out' go. Yes, and he can bring the tobacco up, take it back—he a brother indeed. And maybe, after you have

all got almost rich, and help each other very, very much, this mythical brother might fall in love with Dottie, and—and—and—”

Again this happiness up near the sky filled full and overflowed the dingy little garret and filled the dark old stairway with laughter through the half-open door, which had lost its lock and key from old age, as a poor old man loses his teeth.

The man turned about, thrust his completed notes deep in his pocket, and looking keenly at his watch, once more tapped the floor, musing, as if he ought to be hastening on his way but did not quite like to leave. The large-eyed girl came up close to him, glanced back over her shoulder, and then at the child.

“They—they will not find me here?”

“My child, they won’t want to find *you*. They will only want to find it—Dollie!”

The girl started, fell back, put up her hand to her head, as if she was trying to hold her thoughts together and keep her best senses about her.

There was something that involved more than liberty—life. The man looked at his watch again, then at the eager, strained face of the girl; and then, as if calmly taking time by the hand, he said:

“It is nothing new, nothing new to me; and I had as well tell you now, perhaps, as at any time; and it is not of any consequence now that you are here. No; they will not find you or it, Dottie, up here, I think.

“You see, this is an undiscovered country down here, or rather up here, to all the other part of the great city; and if you do not go out and about I think no one will find you here for a thousand years.”

“But—but—Dollie—who—what do they want with her?”

"Yes, Dollie. Well, you know that old woman, that old monster with the basket who first followed you?"

The girl threw up her hands, as if to plead, to protest.

"Yes, I know; it is a wretched subject; and so, although I knew—knew all the time what she was about for the past three years, I have not said one word, I have not mentioned her; but now I will tell you about her. You see, she is wealthy now. Yes, she has a splendid house on Fifth Avenue. She has horses, carriages, dogs—even a pew in a fashionable church. Strange, isn't it?"

The man stopped, looked at her great, wondering eyes, put out his hand to touch her wondrous hair, and as she stepped back out of his reach, went on:

"Strange, strange! Here you have toiled, starved. You have kept your sweet soul white like snow. I have not even so much as kissed your little brown hand, Dottie, nor has any man, so far as your will was consulted; and yet here are you—she up there in luxury and splendor."

"But Dollie?"

"Ah! yes, Dollie. Well, there was a bad man, who was not all bad. You would not believe this if I told you his name. I, however, ought to be the last man to see any good in that cold and merciless creature. Yet, Dottie, no man is entirely, utterly bad. Believe it, my child. It is best to believe that. And then it is true. A man may be rotten at heart, hollow at heart like a tree, and yet live on like a tree, if there is sap and blood enough in his veins to put forth one single green leaf; and, like a tree, may make some bit of beauty on the dusty roadside of life or shelter one weary soul from the burning sun. It is Matherson I mean."

"And he wants my—my—"

“Your little niece.”

The girl did not answer, but went around the head of the two boxes to the side of the mattress, and falling on her knees, took the baby's two hands in her own ; and as her face sank down by that of the sleeping child it was hidden in the sombre mantle of hair.

Her shoulders heaved and fell once or twice as the man came around, and she half turned her head to listen, but with face still hidden and averted.

“As long as the child played about the park,” the man went on, after looking once more at his watch, and making certain that he was not going to get the worst of it in this wrestle with time—“as long as they could see her there, and know that she was comfortable and well, things were allowed to remain as they were. But now, down here, where there is so much misery, where God in His mercy kills off three fourths of the children, lest they, too, shall grow up and be as miserable as the others here, why, that old monster, who has kept watch over you all the time, will be instructed to take Dollie from you as surely as she is found.”

The girl only held on more tightly to the two little hands in her grief and desperation. Then a sob broke from her breast, as if rending her soul. “Now, Dottie, look here”—the man bowed down over her—“that would not be so bad, even if he was to have her all to himself. No ; not so very bad, now, I think. He is rich, powerful now, will be one of the great men of this great city. Dollie would be a lady in time, with him to look after her. But with you—”

The girl let go the hands, rose on her knees, lifted her face, and throwing back her hair, looked at him in such a despairing way that he was startled.

He could already see her catching up her child, steal-

ing down the stairs, flying, flying on, on to where? The river? He must undo what he had done; and so he began again:

"The man who followed you to the edge of the park and turned back had only instructions to keep track of you there. He will wait in the park one, two, three days, maybe a week, waiting for you to come back. If you do not return in the course of that time, then he will report to the grand lady, with the horses and carriages and dogs, on the avenue; then she will report to the rich and rising Matherson. This will take a long time, Dottie. I was only saying if, after all, at the end of a month or two, this rich man, who seems to be so pleased with the sweet face of this child, should finally be permitted to send her to school, to clothe her, keep her like a little lady, Dottie; and you could see her every day, Dottie, remember—see her every day, be with her all the time nearly, Dottie; why, it wouldn't be so very, very bad, would it?"

"Wouldn't be so very, very bad?"

The girl's two hands again nervously sought those of the child, as if to be certain she still was at her side; but she did not say more.

She only looked her horror and her terror, her everlasting hatred for that man and that old monster who had prospered on the sins of the dreadful city.

Suddenly the man turned and said, with one foot set toward the door: "I can trust you; and it will do you good to tell you. Yes, maybe wrath like yours is just. It is natural and right in one who has been so bitterly wronged. So listen to me. That woman is to die—die a felon's death."

The girl half arose. Pitiful to say, this promise of revenge was like a shower on a thirsty garden. It was not

only the promise of revenge, justice, but immunity from that persistent, eternal pursuit which had driven her to madness.

"Yes, Dottie," the man continued, tapping the foot next the door nervously ; "her great, fine house on Fifth Avenue, where she has lived and prospered so much on sin, shall in a little time know her no more. All the gold of the wealthy men who have made her what she is and was will not serve her now. We—some men of the press—have drawn the lines so tightly about her, the evidence is so clear and certain—clear and certain enough to hang a dozen such creatures—that escape is simply impossible. No ; do not imagine she could take ship or rail or special train. Fortune has blinded her, thrown gold into her unkind old eyes, till she can see nothing, suspect nothing but luck and prosperity for herself. She has a dozen spies watching others. We have two dozen spies watching her one dozen spies. When that man in her pay pursued you to the edge of the park we knew it in less than half an hour. She is doomed, girl, I tell you—doomed to death. And if she does not die in that great and gorgeous house on Fifth Avenue, in her bower of roses, behind her curtains of silk and damask, by her own hand, she shall die on the gallows ! By Heaven ! I swear it."

The girl sprang up and came up so closely to the man that, as his lifted hand descended, it fell, for the first time, on her glory of hair. It rested there like a benediction, for a moment undisturbed. She believed this man implicitly ; was certain that this monster should die, and die precisely as he had said ; and all the revenge which was natural, and so must be born with us, was aroused in her as she stood there that night under the weight of a hand that was lifted to heaven and registered an oath of vengeance.

"But it will take time, Dottio," the man said, finally letting his hand fall. "You see, the wealth of these men who have made her what she is will defend her, help her, try to save her. We who are to hunt her down are poor, almost helpless. And this seems so strange to you. But you must understand that even the great newspapers are in these rich men's pay oftentimes. Even owners of these great corporations, which speak earnestly of right and justice and purity and truth, are sometimes her fast friends. But do not fear; do not doubt. All we ask is time. You are satisfied—certain that she shall perish from the earth—and be content to remain here till it is done; will you stay in this room till I say leave it?"

"I will stay in this room till you say leave it."

"Good! good! and now good-night."

The man put out his hand to the girl before him, nodded to the pale, thin girl who leaned against the table farther back from the door and looked on in dumb wonder, and then turned a second time to go.

He stepped toward the pale, thin girl once more, and said: "I will have to be down here a great deal in this part of the town. I will have to be here to-morrow morning to see about getting the tobacco for you both; for your brother, too—your 'lock-out' brother. And I have a little favor to ask. You will grant it?"

The pale, thin girl, weary as she was, came eagerly forward.

"I want you to get me up a first-rate breakfast; get it early and spread it out on that table. Spread for three—for four if your 'lock-out' brother is about; and have it ready at punctually eight in the morning."

The girl eagerly and earnestly assented.

"Here is the money—a dollar. It will be a small

breakfast for four. But I would have to pay that up-town for myself, if I breakfast at all, and I want to see what you can do down here."

"A—a fried beefsteak?"

"A what! I would make it a criminal offence to fry a beefsteak; a doubly criminal offence to eat a fried beefsteak. No, child; fruit, bread, coffee—a broiled chop, if you like; but in summer-time fruit—fruit, bread and fruit, and fruit and bread. There was an old Arab caliph who rode a red camel and lived on a bottle of water and a fig a day while he besieged and overthrew Jerusalem. Ah! you smile. I see you don't quite recall the old caliph. Well, anyhow, have fruit—good fruit, clean, healthy fruit. I tell you, God would not have made fruit so plenty and meat so scarce in the hot summer-time if He did not mean for us to eat the one and avoid the other."

The man turned, and was about to disappear at last. Then he faced about, and fumbling in his vest-pocket, brought forth and handed the girl ten cents. "And, say, get a pitcher of ice-water; yes, for the little one there. Good-by."

"You will be here at eight?"

"At exactly eight, my little landlady; and if I am not here at exactly eight, just on the stroke of the clock, sit down and eat without me. Good-by!"

Dottie pulled at her companion's sleeve. The girls looked at each other, but the pale, thin girl did not seem to understand as Dottie did. Again the man lifted his hat, turned on his heel, felt a moment for the knob on the toothless old door; then, as he disappeared, Dottie caught up the greasy little lamp, and standing out in the hall, heard a "Thank you, Dottie" come up cheerily from the stifling depths below.

CHAPTER XIII.

"A PLAGUE-SPOT."

THE monstrous creature with which this narrative opened was even at the time we first saw her a woman of no mean consequence, however mean her assumed apparel and calling. She had already, as we have seen, planted herself in the heart of the fashionable part of the great city.

But the plant had not yet grown to the fearful form it soon after assumed in this fervid and feverish life we have been endeavoring to depict.

Yet when her infamous mansion was completed, and her carriages and liveried footman became a conspicuous feature in the very door-yard of fashion, people began to look at each other in blank and silent horror. Men marvelled at her audacity.

When she took a pew in a fashionable church they were appalled. They spoke of her in whispers and with white lips. Every one spoke of her, every one knew of her dark and deadly work. But she was spoken of only under the breath, as one might speak of a deadly shame that had entered his house and sat down to abide at his hearthstone.

The able, white-robed minister in the magnificent church across the way was silent.

It was not a fit theme for him to treat. Here was a sin at his door of such awful shape and terror that he, for all his glory of white robes, for all his high salary,

high position, his high pulpit, his thousand faithful following, did not dare attack.

He pleaded for the heathen, the missionaries afar off ; he prayed for pagans far away ; he skirmished with the little fashionable sins of his people. But he had no valor for the shame, the damnation, within the sound of his voice.

People waited to hear him speak of it. His following waited to be led to battle. He was a coward.

The law stood by silent and paralyzed. The city was given over to sin, to plunder, to shameless shame. And the officers of the city protected this creature while they plundered the treasury of the great city, and saddled the people with millions of debts. The infamous " Ring " was in all its glory.

Meantime this singular woman, as has since gradually come to be the custom, from her fashionable pew in the church looked forward tranquilly to her death, and bought a piece of land, and built herself a splendid tomb.

This tomb stands, even now, in the heart of the cemetery at Tarrytown, on the Hudson. It is a marble mausoleum. It is splendid, with a naked babe in a cradle placed on a massive block of marble. It is high above and not far away from the simple, chipped, and battered slab that marks the resting-place of Washington Irving.

At one time this desperate woman was arrested, tried, convicted, and sent to the State Prison.

The good people of the city took in a long breath of satisfaction ; but their delight was of short duration. For brief as was her term of sentence, it was soon discovered that she was all the time, after the first few days, quietly attending to her affairs at her palatial house on Fifth Avenue.

She was giving splendid entertainments there to her

keepers—to the keepers of the city's treasure and honor, too.

But the undercurrent of indignation had been growing beyond all her suspicion of its power and peril. The press, the purchased press, the large corporations which had been long silenced by advertisements, pay, in city patronage, began to growl ominously.

Walton, as well as his few, his very few friends—men of his simple and secure notions of honor, right, and wrong—had never been for a single day silent.

But who heard them? Who could hear them from their dark alleys, their garrets, their humble abodes? They had no great, high pulpits to thunder from. They had not powerful organs in which to utter protest and warning.

The papers that once spoke for the people are no more.

They had even now been merged into mighty corporations. At the head of each of these mighty corporations stood a shrewd, cold, deliberate, and cautious man of business. When an article was brought to him for publication it was read deliberately, calmly, dispassionately, from one point, and one point only—*Will it pay?* Will it drive out one advertisement or bring one in?

Up to this time it had been decided by the great newspapers whose able and honest founders were dead and gone that it would not pay to attack the Bastille.

And so up to this time the upas-tree had stood in the fashionable heart of the great city, casting its awful shadow, spreading its influence like a plague-spot, its dark and indescribable, indefinable terrors over all, silencing all.

People passed by on the other side of the street, under the shadow of the sanctuary, and looked across only fur-

tively, then let their eyes fall in silence and in shame to the stones.

Shouts of derisive laughter were heard there the night long. This woman sat at the head of her table, while she was at the same time serving a term in the State Prison.

She was seen driving daily in the park. She was at the same hour serving out her term in the State Prison. She was so desperate, so wicked, that even some of her most desperate and most wicked friends, in their apprehension of what was to follow, began to drop away from her, to dread her. She sought to hold them fast at her side by renewed and more vigorous devotion to their interests, wishes, desires, and dissipations.

And so when it was reported to her the next day that the beautiful little child with the sad and silent face was no more to be seen in the park, she set her wits to work with all the skill and energy and precision which had first distinguished her.

She did not wait to consult Matherson. He, she feared, was one of those who were falling away from her, who had outgrown her, wished to part from her forever.

* * * * *

As Walton had foreseen, the two girls whom he had left so happy, and yet so miserable, up in the rickety old housetop, full of plans for the future and hopes of honest toil with their hands, were quite unable to leave the little room the next day. He did not hasten to keep his promise of coming to breakfast at all. He knew they needed rest ; food and rest ; rest of mind and of body. He was content to keep away and keep on with his work while he knew they had both.

It was almost dark the next day as, with his pockets full of all kinds of little cheap luxuries, he turned up

the alley from the narrow street for his hour of rest and recreation.

This was the man's reward. A good man, an entirely unselfish man, was he. Yet, where on the face of the earth could this lover of his kind, this seeker after bits of human nature, this helper of the weak, have found so much real pleasure, instruction, rest, for so little money as here?

He was so alone and so in need of companionship of an honest and natural kind. The brown-stone steps in Fifth Avenue, as a rule, were too steep for him to climb, he had once said to Dottie; but she did not quite understand. Yet here he was climbing straight into the air.

As he had turned up the alley, he felt that he was followed. When he reached the worn and dirty door-sill he stopped, turned, and looked back.

A stout, well-clad man in a short coat, with his right hand in his pocket, stopped at the entrance of the alley, and turned sharp about also.

Walton took a hurried glance up and down the alley, placed a hand on his right hip, stood there a moment, taking a square look at the square back at the mouth of the dark alley, and then suddenly, with a sigh and sign of displeasure, turned and slowly climbed the steep and innumerable steps.

He had promised the poor, tired girl at the top that she should not be disturbed by that old monster any more.

He knew now very well where the man with the square back who had been following him had come from; and, tired as he was, alone, unarmed, he felt like turning back and murdering him.

With well-affected merriment, however, he entered the dark little room at the top, lifted his hat, and made

great show of regrets and excuses for not keeping his engagement to breakfast.

It was his coachman's fault. Yes; his tardy coachman had been delayed by tearing the cockade off his own hat with his great whip, which he had caught in the great cockade, and that was why he had missed the train, and so did not get to breakfast till after supper-time.

And as he bowed and smiled, and emptied his pockets, and popped another bottle of ice-cold soda water, the pale, thin girl and the black-eyed and silent beauty at her side laughed merrily.

Their laughter was more to him, more musical and precious, than had been the clink and rattle and gleam of thousands in gold counted down in compensation for his care.

Even the little child laughed as they ate and drank together, the first time it had laughed or hardly opened its pouting and pretty little lips since the terrified mother had so savagely silenced her the night before.

But, somehow, things would not continue running on smoothly. Twice the man had fancied he heard footsteps on the creaking stairs at the door. Twice the two girls bantered him on his sudden silence and preoccupation. And then at length they too began to be still.

The dark one began to cough. She turned away her head, took an old stained handkerchief from her pocket, and finally got up from her seat on the box by the table, and went away into a corner and coughed with her face to the wall. When she came back she was very pale, but tried hard to smile. The terrible strain she had passed through had been too much for her.

Walton glanced at a corner of the handkerchief which she held tight in her hand. It was stained with blood. She hastily put it away.

Neither spoke.

The silence that fell upon the little group after that, and lay like a pall, was long and painful. The child had crept up on the mother's knee, and, laying its little head against the girl's breast, was now fast asleep.

The great, wondering eyes looked down on the sleeping child with sad but silent pity and concern.

Walton had never been so troubled in his life. The man at the mouth of the alley stood before him all the time. He must carry the war into Africa. The Bastille must fall and at once.

The city, the people, were ready for the attack. He knew he could not leave this girl's side now for an hour in safety to her and hers.

Any great excitement or strain would kill her now. He thought of his little group of friends up in the garret, where the gas shot out like a lance at right angles in their faces, as the only immediate help he could possibly command. Two or three of these members of the press he knew were now, along with some of the citizens, laying siege to the shameless mansion and its inmates on Fifth Avenue, determined that the monster there should leave it, and in irons, to be taken to the prison where she belonged.

Oh, for a little money now, ever so little, to help this poor, broken, dying girl! In the absence of money, which would pave her way to some retreat of rest and peace, she must be protected where she was.

"You must go to bed and sleep," he said. The man wrote a note, rose up hurriedly, went down, out into the dark alley, and down to the street.

The man with the broad back turned about just across the narrow street, and again showed his back, while he held his right hand still in his pocket. Walton went on

for a block down the narrow street, entered a telegraph office suddenly, dispatched his message, and came out. As he did so he met the broad-backed man almost face to face.

He did not seem to notice this heavy-shouldered man, but sauntered leisurely back toward the mouth of the dark alley.

All was as still as if it had been the mouth of a cavern. It was past midnight now, and all who dwelt or toiled here were fast asleep—asleep or invisible, and still as ghosts in their dark and doubtful ways.

Walton had stood but a few moments there in the mouth of the cave when the heavy shoulders came in full view before him.

The reporter did not move a step, but, standing there close to the wall, he drew forth a cigar, struck a match, and began to smoke leisurely in the presence of the massive shoulders. The shoulders were more disgusted than ever, and with a great heave the heavy shoulders stepped back and across the narrow street to watch and wait the end of that cigar.

The clock had already struck one. When it struck two the cigar was finished. Walton threw the stump against the wall across the alley, and it sparkled and danced over the cobble-stones like a firecracker.

The dark and heavy shoulders across the narrow street from the mouth of the cavern seemed to take in a long breath of relief.

Now what would be done? Surely the man will move on, thought the shoulders, and I, as a faithful shadow, do my work, and then shall escape death from suffocation in this vile air. What will he do now? Which way will he go?

In that darkest hour which always precedes dawn the

graphed on every heart indelibly and forever. True, no one saw the face. But all had seen enough.

Death demands respect, and has it always.

Walton and his friends felt that a great and good work had at last been done.

The press—a few meanly-paid members of the press—it seemed, had undertaken and completed a task that all the law and religion of the city, in their terror and dismay, had scarcely dared mention above a whisper.

These men went their ways, chronicled the achievement with scarce a mention of themselves, but in their hearts thanked Heaven that this one terrible plague-spot had been effaced.

Brief mention was made of a burial at Tarrytown; the half million of property was passed over to the administrator of the estate of shame; and that seemed to be the end.

Yet a few weeks later it was whispered that Madame — was living in great luxury and splendor in Paris. The body of one of her dead victims had been substituted in the bath for her own.

CHAPTER XIV.

CLINGING TO THE WRECKS.

It is a stormy sea, this city. In the heart of it, where the streets are narrow, dirty, full of disease ; where the working people live like rats in the old houses, that their rich owners may grow more rich over their misery, you may hear a continual moan like the moaning of the sea about a bleak and rocky coast.

High up in the crazy old housetops hundreds, thousands hide away, climb up, and cling to life as shipwrecked seamen cling to the masts of ships.

The people here are wrecked seamen. Some of them have seen tranquil seas—life, heart, happiness. Here they are wrecked entirely, hopelessly lost. They will cling to the rigging, to the wreck, to anything they can lay hold of and hold on to for a season.

But they know—all know, that in time they must let go, give up all hold, fall down into the dark sea of sin and sorrow that rolls and roars below ; and there, after drifting about a little time, sink down into the depths of the dreadful sea of sorrow and of sin, and soul and body go down, down, never to be even cast up again on the white sands of any shore this side eternity.

Dottie and her thin, pale companion were, as we have seen, in one of these tottering housetops, clinging, clutching, holding on with all the force that was in them.

Dottie had been borne down the stream, trying to get a footing here and there ; but at last, in spite of all, she

was borne quite away and on and down by the force of the stream to the great sea. The little hands were not strong. And so at last we find her here, where thousands and thousands of others had been borne, just like herself, weak and helpless.

It is not always the best at heart who can hold on best.

But she did not complain here in the housetop. The constant smell of the musty and dusty tobacco made her ill, with a dull, heavy, and sea-sick illness. Only this illness here did not come to an end as illness of the sea ends.

She missed the park, the fine air, the cheery voices of the little Saxon, flaxen-haired children, the pretty sweetness, cleanness of her little geranium room looking out over the strong, young trees.

She missed the merry company of the chorus girls at the theatre, the long and pleasant walk to and from her work there.

Once she stopped rolling the reeking tobacco, as she leaned over and half doubled at her work by the window at the housetop, and, staggering up slowly, wondered if she was strong enough to walk all the way to the park with Dollie. She feared she could not walk all the way. Yet she was sorely tempted to throw down her work, take up the pale little Dollie, who was trying to build a Brooklyn Bridge in the corner out of tobacco-stems, and make the effort. It ended with a sigh, this first, new, desperate resolution, and again she leaned over the reeking tobacco, and went on patiently with her work, till God's curtain of darkness came softly down over the window and told her that the weary day's work was done.

She was alone now.

Her companion? Twice or thrice maybe the brother—

the "lock-out" brother of the pale, thin girl—had bravely climbed up out of the surging sea that rolled and beat below, and tried hard to cling and hold fast high up there where his sister was.

But it was no use. He fell down finally, and for the last time, into the sea below.

And what was saddest of all, drew his pale, thin, and silent sister down with him, as she tried, with love and true devotion, to hold him by the hand.

And down there somewhere, down in the dark caves of this sea and through the surging caverns in the slime and ooze, and along with the kelp and seaweed, spars and bars, and along with the reeking corpses of many cast-aways, the pale, thin girl disappeared, and never came to the surface any more.

There is a low, black, and noiseless little steamer to be seen stealing up the East River at a certain hour each day. Its deck is packed with cheap and dimly stained coffins. The boat hugs the shore under the banks as if ashamed of being seen.

Its deck is loaded down with a freight of these pitiful dead who have been wrecked, cast away in this dolorous sea, with no one to claim them or close their eyes and lay them away to rest.

It was a sad story, and one might well wish it were not true—the life, the death, the final burial of this brother, whose outstretched hand the sister had clutched till she too was drawn down, down into the sea and drowned. And the pitiful part of it is they both perished the same sultry, reeking night.

It is one of God's arrangements of mercy that people cannot long endure the pain and sin of these caverns in this sea.

Oh, for the roomy, cool corn-fields of the Far West;

one breath of air from them for these reeking, sultry nights of summer down here !

On the deck of this black and silent little boat that stole in a tired, weary way up the river to the Pauper's Island of Rest one sultry twilight, lay brother and sister side by side.

It was only an accident, a chance that it was so. No one knew, no one cared, that these two castaways that had clung together and died together were brother and sister, who had loved each other, who had left the sweet woods of the Alleghanies only a year or two before and come to the city to make their fortunes !

And now they were going away together, borne across the dark river together, Charon rowing silently over the River Styx, brother and sister, side by side, along with a hundred other pauper dead, in their dim, cheap, countless coffins.

And no one knew or cared about them or their sad history, save a reporter who had watched them hopelessly.

And God—let us hope and pray that God, too, knew.

The pale, thin girl had not disappeared suddenly and all at once from the dingy little room in the high and rickety old housetop ; she went away at intervals, each time lengthening the time of absence, till at last it had no end.

The first time Walton called and she was not in, Dottie met him at the door.

An inborn, not inbred, instinct made her always a lady, miserable as she was. Very respectfully, very kindly, tenderly even, she received him. He was by nature a gentleman, as she was a lady.

His foot stayed at the threshold of that old door, with neither lock nor key, and no power under the sun could have forced him to cross it, as he stood there, hat in

hand, before this girl, even if she had not risen up and stood in the door before him.

And now, when only two hands toiled there by the window, sorting out the ugly leaves, cutting, rolling, twisting, bending for twelve hours a day, with her sweet face down to the poisonous stuff that is used to destroy vermin with ; this stuff that even rats and reptiles will not rest in—oh, it was pitiful ! At such times it was the little child who met him at the door, the girl keeping on, with her face bent to her toil, looking up only now and then, for pride and honor were truly in her heart.

She must not receive so much as one crust from this man, from any one, that she did not repay.

She never had received charity, and she never would.

She now had to pay all the rent herself, since her toiling companion had been drowned in the sea below ; and she must work incessantly.

The miserable wretch who gathered the rent for these miserable dens had observed that the girl never ventured out. He shrewdly guessed that she did not dare go out, for some good reason or another. He saw that she was half-way comfortable, and would like to remain ; in fact, would hardly dare to move.

He doubled her rent.

The tobacco was brought by a man who was now sent around to the tenement-houses by the great factory to deliver and bring away the work.

The girl never went out of that house. Up and down the creaky stairs twice a day for a can of water—that was all she spared from bending over the tobacco.

Where would it all end ?

* * * * *

Walton had a friend in the mines who wrote glowing accounts and pictured possible fortunes of vast propor-

tions ; but his letters invariably closed by asking for a few dollars till they could strike it in the great mine. And so he was kept the poorest of the poor.

The fight was hard. The weather was hot, sultry. He was himself not strong. The daily task of climbing up the stairs to the little tobacco room in the rickety old house was a hard one now. Where, indeed, would all this end ?

About this time it transpired that a great ball, the greatest of the great balls of the great city, was to be given by the great millionaire who had been pounding away with his great closed fists at the doors of society.

They had refused to open, these doors of society. He would try his sledge-hammer of gold.

He sent for Walton, and demanded to know of all the great balls of old which was the greatest ? which had cost the most money ?

Walton told him of one that had taken place in ancient Rome, which cost more than a hundred thousand dollars.

The great railroad king sighed. He thought for a moment, closed his tight hands tighter, but at last gasped :

“ I will go that twenty-five thousand better.”

Then, after a moment, he turned in his great gold and leather throne, in his great gold and silver palace, and said to Walton : “ Write it up ! Yes, write it up now, and I will make the ball what you write. They must all come, too. You must put in all the wealthy women in all their clothes. You can do this now—the first thing. Get it all ready. They will tell you what they are going to wear, maybe, beforehand, so you can get it all ready. And now see that you make no mistakes ; people hate reporters who make mistakes about dresses. Begin with Hattie Lane. Yes, she will be here. Matherson will be here. A rising and a rich man

is my friend Matherson ; but Hattie Lane is poor—dog poor.”

Walton bit his lip, but calmly began, calmly went on with his work as the great millionaire smiled his vast smile.

Then the great, big man with the big, fat hands again talked on from his gold and leather throne : “ Oh, yes, he had known Hattie’s father well. They had been great friends. But the old colonel had never kept his hands closed. And now he was poor, and no doubt he expected him, after the custom in Europe, to endow his daughter. Would he ? ”

At the very thought it seemed the great man’s hands both clutched more tightly to the arms of the throne, as if he once more feared they might let go their hold of one single dollar of all his scores of millions.

CHAPTER XV.

IN A NERVOUS STATE.

"WHAT is physical exhaustion and nervous debility, my dear boy?" asked a young man of New York, one morning, after he had read the paper, of his companion in Wall Street, as he was holding on to the tape of the ticker. He was referring to Mr. Stone. The man at the ticker did not turn around or stop for a second. He looked hard down the throat of the ticker, and then chewing at the stub of his cigar, and rolling it about in his mouth, said sharply: "Nervous debility is—is—nervous debility."

Some said it was physical exhaustion that had thrown Stone in such a shocking state of "nervous debility."

He told his doctor it was persistent devotion to business that had so affected his mental vigor and unexampled tranquillity under the most exciting battles of Wall Street, and so needed rest—quiet. But some vicious and envious men, who had not had much but disaster in Wall Street, hinted that he only made this an excuse for giving up the costly brandies which he could no longer afford to indulge in.

Others, again, laid the whole load of the great speculator's health, mental and physical and financial, right down at the door of a mysterious stranger with a car-load of gold from the West. And they refused to abandon that position for a moment.

But whatever was the cause, certainly the effect was

terrible. The once serene and ever tranquil man, who had held his finger on the pulse of the whole financial world at one time with a calmness that amazed all men, was now but a bundle of nerves.

And suffering ! His torments would have begged pity from any enemy he ever had ; mercy at least from every man on earth, from all human kind.

With loss upon loss, and a continual succession of losses, as if some invisible fiend pursued him, reached out to thwart him in everything, the poor speculator's hand trembled so that he could scarcely sign his name to his check.

Men had said that this wonderful dark and silent little man could endure everything—could sit still and see his millions melt away, and not complain or cry out once.

They did not know this dark and silent little man. It was other men's millions he had seen melt away with such composure, not his own. When it came to his own it was quite another matter.

This wonderful little man, who had been so brave all the time under the losses of others, was really at heart the biggest coward in all the world.

There is a complaint, a blackness of the heart, which, if permitted to remain there, to corrode and remain there, unwatered or washed out by some deeds of love and mercy, rots and weakens all the cords of valor ; and there is no coward so cowardly as the man with this disease.

This man, who had stolen millions, had become so audacious that he even arrested those who dared to say he had not the power or capacity to keep his stolen property.

But the arrest and imprisonment of those who had dared to say that he was insolvent had done no good.

In fact, this, the night following the arrest and imprisonment of his detractors, was the first night he had not slept at all.

True, he had spent many nights of almost entire sleeplessness; but this was the first night he had literally not closed his eyes. That invisible hand seemed to be reaching out for him even in his bedroom. When he sat at breakfast the next morning he seemed to see that fearful and ever-present, ever-pursuing hand reaching out to take the bread untasted from his thin and trembling lips.

Still he went down to Wall Street and struggled on. It was something to him that even now the street was in sympathy with him. The truth was, all felt that when Stone fell they, too, should fall, and with them Wall Street.

"While Rome and the Coliseum stand, stands the world."

And if Wall Street should fall, what would become of all the wealth these gamblers held in the Stock Board? Their seats alone were each worth \$30,000—yes, \$50,000! They must stand by Stone, so that the street should stand by them.

The next night, however, the poor, distressed man did not even undress. He sat alone—so alone now!

He sat alone till the clock struck one! It startled him. He felt that if he did not sleep by two he could not sleep at all that night.

He felt, too, that if he did not sleep that night he would never sleep again.

The dark, dried-up little skeleton clutched both hands to the arms of his chair and arose suddenly.

He threw off his coat and turned down the bed-clothes. He was standing by the bureau, with the glass

before him. As he unloosened his necktie he glanced into the glass.

He saw something there so hideous, so hard, so black, so bony, so ghostly, and altogether grinning and hideous, that he turned back with an exclamation of horror, and fell again into his seat.

He had seen his own face.

Two ! three !! four !!! dawn !!!!

The man moaned and arose, and tried to fasten out the daylight, the face of God, as one would fasten out a burglar !

It was no use. The sun only laughed at him. It stuck a long, rosy finger in through a crack in the green blind, and lit up the whole room.

The man threw on his coat and went forth from his room and hastened to the street. A watchman—his own watchman there—was about to lay hand on him.

He looked so hard, so desperate, that he thought him a hall-thief.

The watchman had no suspicion what a colossal thief he had clutched hold of till he took a second look at his face.

As he turned the corner and desperately beckoned to a car the conductor hesitated to take him on. He thought him drunk. He stood close up to the track and climbed into the next car going in the direction of the Park.

The conductor literally lifted him from the ground, and tenderly helping him to a seat, placed his hat on his head and asked him if there was anything he could do for him.

There was no one else in the car, and so the indulgent conductor, not for a moment dreaming that he should ever in his life have the distinguished honor of setting

eyes on the great Stone, did not even ask him for his fare.

And so, for sweet Charity's sake, he had his ride to the edge of the cool, sweet-smelling Park all for nothing.

The worn and weary man hastened across the street, entered the gate, and soon was hidden in the deep and delicious woods.

He was refreshed. Nature does not even ask your name when you come to her for healing, for rest or help of any kind.

The invalid felt so much relieved by the cool, pure air here, the peace, the absence of all possible suggestions of Wall Street, that he kept on, on, on.

By and by he came to the edge of the cool, large lake. It seemed so tranquil, so smiling, restful, happy. He walked down to the very edge. He even smiled here in grateful thanks for the peace he found; and as he smiled he leaned over and looked down into the deep, clear water.

A wild cry of horror, and he started back!

Was it his horror of the cool, clear water? Had he drank and drank and drank in secret till water to him was horrible to see? This we may never know. Possibly it was the sight of his face that frightened him. Maybe it was his terror of water and the horror of his hideous face together.

For he had again seen his own face! And so hideous this time, so corpse-like! Was that grinning face there indeed himself?

Oh, it was surely pitiful to see! This man had never loved anything or any one but himself.

Could he now love himself? Was that frightened, wild, wicked, cowardly, cringing, Guiteau-face there before him a face to love?

This man, who had plundered hundreds, had robbed thousands—this man, who had driven many a noble man mercilessly to death, was now dying even more terribly than any of his hundred thousand victims ever yet had died.

He now felt that something more terrible than that ever-present, ever-haunting, outstretching hand was pursuing him !

What was it ? Death !

He felt that death was close at his heels, and he turned and fled with all the feeble force that was in him. But his reason was still steady on its throne.

It was a part of God's plan, perhaps, that he should have his senses about him to the last ; that he should suffer, and suffer, and suffer to the last gasp.

He clambered into a hack—the first one at hand—and bade the man drive at once to a physician famous for skill in the treatment of nervous disorders who lived on Fifty-fifth Street.

He staggered up the broad, steep steps, and entered the spacious hall.

He found the great specialist in his restful and classic consultation-room—for it was no longer early morning—and sank at once into one of the luxurious leather chairs before him.

The doctor sat quietly in his chair, the wide and book-laden table between him and his nervous and dying patient with the black and glittering eyes.

The restful, healthy, tranquil, and good-hearted physician looked straight and quietly at the miserable, suffering little creature before him, but did not speak.

“Doctor, I have money—plenty of money. Yes, yes ; I—I will pay you, pay you, pay you well ; for,

you see, if I get well again I will make millions, millions, millions."

How his voice trembled, quivered, broke at "millions, millions, millions," as if it meant the world, the whole wide world, and heaven and hell, too!

And so it did—to him.

"Doctor, I have not slept for two nights—for a month, in fact. If I do not sleep to-night, I will die—I will die—I will die."

"Yes, I think you will," calmly answered the doctor, still looking steadily and tranquilly in his face.

The tranquillity, the persistent repose of the great specialist, gave a singular sense of confidence to the desperate little being before him, and he arose and came around the table and stood up close before him, humbly as a beggar might stand.

He was begging—begging for his life; for more than life—for sleep, for forgetfulness.

Never before had this suffering man been heard to speak so eloquently.

He had been called the sphinx of Wall Street. His orders—all his great commands, his dictations which had shaken the financial centres of the earth—had been made by signs and single words. He had been all silence.

Now he was all words.

And although his lips were dry and his tongue thick and heavy, he seemed afraid to be silent. He seemed to fear to stop pleading, speaking, lest he should never be able to speak again this side the sea of darkness.

The dry lips were growing still more dry. The thick, heavy tongue was forgetting its office.

The black, glittering eyes were burning brighter and brighter back in the hollow caverns of the head. The

two long hands were opening and stretching pitifully, helplessly.

The doctor had hardly yet spoken a word. But the man went on in his wild appeal, his prayer for help.

Oh, he did not want to die ! He could not die. He could not dare to think of death.

Why should he, who had so much money—so much money—die now ? He, of all men ?

The doctor still did not answer. Could he hear ? Would he heed ? Did he understand ?

How he was suffering ! He was being literally consumed—burned alive, soul and body—as he stood there begging—begging for life, with burnt lips and burning tongue.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE MAN WITH A CLOSED HAND.

STONE was not permitted to die; but he was permitted to live, to suffer, and to suffer terribly.

Night and day, day and night, he endured the most exquisite torture man can suffer and survive. He came to be merely a little tawny piece of walking parchment, a sort of dwarf skeleton, this man who had loved only himself and his money.

Ay, this was a new order of man—a sort of new and poisonous fungus that had grown out of the very opulence of this land and time.

The disease of which he suffered, his nervous fear, his mental fright, suspicion, his perpetual torture, was new to science.

The learned and able specialist to whom he appealed so pitifully, as we have seen, could give him no real remedy.

What he needed was a new heart, or rather a heart of any kind, old or new. This clay needed moulding over again. Maybe this is what death is for.

He had seen many men suffer somewhat as he now suffered, only in a far less degree, and their very miseries had been his delight.

This desire to see others suffer had grown upon him rapidly. He was not at all content if he did not see some one writhing in anguish under the tortures he inflicted.

Now, some one, some unseen and mysterious hand, was administering to him the very tortures he had inflicted on his best friends.

This new Robespierre also had a life to lose.

In his despair, as the autumn sped by, and a sense of frost in the air made his thin figure shiver, he appealed in person to another great speculator, the richest man in America—in the world, the man with closed hands.

The great railroad king and speculator, with his hundred millions, received him affably. He shook hands with him cordially for a second ; and then, as if suddenly remembering, closed his hand tightly.

He took the thin, flaky bit of brown parchment knuckles and bones in his great, round, red hand a second time and squeezed it cordially. Then he dropped the dried-up knuckles suddenly again, and again shut up his own hand tight as a steel trap, as if he feared he might, if he left his big red hand open for a single moment longer, let go of something he would not like to lose.

It had been long remarked by those who closely observed the mighty millionaire that he forever held his fists tightly closed.

Whether at table, at cards, driving in the park—anywhere and at all times, he always kept his big red hands clasped and tightly closed.

It was said that he slept with them closed. It was prophesied that when the last long sleep came he would sleep with his fists closed fast ; that he would be found with his fists folded tight in his great granite tomb, even to the day of judgment.

The tawny and shrivelled little sufferer tried to smile and talk in his old, easy way. He alluded, with a hollow laugh, that fatigued even himself, to the tumble and crash and crisis in Wall Street.

The great man, in return, called his attention to the costly pictures on the walls of his impressive mansion, which had cost millions and millions.

The pictures were admired together. The great millionaire, with his fists closed, offered the weak and trembling little skeleton his arm, and they walked the great drawing-rooms together. The price paid for some of the pictures quite took away the little man's breath.

He praised them with all the generosity his vocabulary could bestow. This pleased the other greatly ; a big point gained.

After awhile the two sat down together. The mighty millionaire with the big red hands sat in a great arm-chair of leather and gold. His two big red hands, like monstrous claws, were clasped tightly over the arms on a level with his massive elbows.

Again the nervous and worn and "cornered" little speculator drifted eagerly into stocks ; would the market take a favorable turn—favorable for him ?

They had brandy between them as they talked.

He leaned his lean and bony little body over toward the great railroad king in his great luxurious chair of leather and gold, and became very confidential.

He was willing to trust this great man, he more than insinuated—nay, more, he would take him entirely into his confidence and confess to him that he had been neither fortunate nor judicious of late ; he had been too generous—too generous in his transactions, and was just now a bit embarrassed, being a little "squeezed"—ever so little embarrassed.

Would the great king of railroads and Wall Street tell him in one word what to do to have less care and more money than he then had ?

The massive man in the luxurious chair of leather and

gold leaned forward in return. Their faces were nearly touching each other.

The little man began to feel a glow of hope and fervor not felt in the region of his heart for months. He took a long breath of relief. He felt that the day of doubts, despair, was drawing to a close.

One, two, three, four glasses of brandy !

He clasped his two hands together as he leaned forward, and quietly shook hands with himself.

The great man in the chair of leather and gold smiled massively. Then he smiled tranquilly, mildly.

That smile of his was as wide as the little man's whole face.

More brandy.

Then he held on still more tightly to the arms of his gold and leather throne, and drawing back his face and relaxing, not his hands—no, no, not his tremendous hands—but his wide and benevolent smile, and, half closing his eyes, still keeping his big, fat, red hands fast and tight about the arms of his chair, he began to talk and tell of his wonderfully fast horses.

The little man's pulse stood still. If he had not been as brown as a parchment he would have been as white as the margin of this sheet.

His two hands divided company. They fell apart and rolled out of his lap and fell down at his side, and hung there like two felons that had expiated a crime.

You could almost have heard the bones of those two hands rattle together as they rolled off and hung and swung there at the little brown man's side, in the gorgeous mansion of the modern Croesus.

Wearily he listened to all the idle and extravagant talk of horses, parks, drives.

Wearily he heard the great man say that he was going

to give a ball that would cost a hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars ; that he had heard of a ball or something of that sort that had been given in Rome or Egypt, or Babylon, Thebes, or some old-fashioned sort of a place, which had cost a hundred thousand. Well, he was "going to give 'em twenty-five thousand better ; raise 'em out of their boots ! Twenty-five thousand for a margin, you see."

At mention of this stock term, the old familiar word of Wall Street, the little man grew more uneasy. Once more he alluded eagerly to Wall Street. All in vain !

Again the great, big man with the tight hands turned to other themes. His whole heart was in this ball, he said. No, he had long ceased to care for making money. He left all that to others. He did not want to make money now.

He only wanted to spend money now. Yet it was observed even as he spoke that he held very tightly to the gold and leather arms of his luxurious throne. Yes, he was going to have all the richest and greatest men and the most beautiful women there, the little parchment man among the rest of them. At last wine was brought. Generously it flowed. The red hands grew more red, more large and full of blood ; but, as if by force of habit, they tightened to the arms of the throne.

The little man drank and drank with desperation ; but alas ! there was for him but one balm in Gilead for his deep wounds. This gaunt little gambler knew but one consolation.

The great millionaire understood all this from the first. He was playing cat and mouse with the weary and miserable little wretch before him who was not permitted to die.

He was feasting, fattening on him in his heart, just as

he, the little nervous wretch, had feasted on a hundred thousand others.

As said before, here was a new order of man, a new species of suffering, and a new and terrible delight at this suffering.

Both these men were new types, men new in fact, new in story, romance, or rhyme.

These two men had been friends ; and they had been enemies, too. They were, in fact, covered all over with scars the one had inflicted on the other. And then they together had made many a " pool," " corner," " twist " together. They had had their " puts " and " calls " and " straddles " in Wall Street, and stood shoulder to shoulder till they had, as the big, fat man once put it, " made Rome howl."

But that was all over now. They had made millions together ; but now, somehow, it seemed that the millions they both had made had settled over into the big, fat man's great, big hands ; and they were clutching tightly to the arms of the luxurious throne of leather and gold.

They would never let go of this gold any more.

Suddenly the great man's mouth, made wider with wine, opened wide, and he began of his own accord to talk of Wall Street.

Who was the new man whom all feared down there and was never seen, never personally ? He must have him come to his ball. This new man from out the Far West, with a car-load of solid silver and gold, must come to his ball. He wanted to astonish him. The little brown man settled back with a groan.

The great, big man grew greater in his own estimation, bigger, as he talked on in this strain, hardly letting go of the arms of his chair long enough to lift a glass to his enormous mouth. And the little man grew less and less

as he listened to the glory and the prosperity of the man who was destroying him, till it seemed he would wither up and blow away, or, like a ghost, sink through the floor. How the millionaire did enjoy the worrying of this little guest—this little, brown mouse in the great, tight paws of the cat !

Once, twice, thrice in sheer despair the little man essayed to escape the great cat that gloated over his misery. But each time a big hand thrust out and clasped hard, and still held tightly to a thin arm, and drew the little man, the trembling bundle of nerves, back into his seat.

And each time the trembling and tortured little man, whose lips were dry and parched in spite of all the wine, still faintly and feebly hoped that the great man might at the last give him one word of comfort, one little spark of light in his dark life. This one faint hope made him endure, made him still bear.

Why, they had been thieves together ; no, not thieves, more than that, bigger than that, meaner than that a thousand times—betrayers, plunderers, robbers, wreckers. Why, then, should they not stand shoulder to shoulder now ?

Why, indeed ! Do you suppose the little man would have been more lenient than the big, phlegmatic man before him, had their positions been reversed by the wheel of fortune ?

Not at all. He would have gloated over the other's misery just the same. Such is the singular result of this new and unexampled order of things, this magnificent gambling. Such is one of the not desirable features of this new order of men here discussed.

The day was far spent when the little brown man, with tottering limbs and in utter despair, arose to leave the presence of the mighty millionaire.

With a refinement of cruelty—a quality not apparent in anything else about him—the great man with his own great hand turned the golden knob and swung open the massive mahogany door for the little man to depart.

He even descended far down the great stone steps, shook the trembling little handful of parchment and bones, and begging him not to forget that he was to be one of the chief features of the great ball, bade him good-night.

Ah ! the agony, the humiliation, the utter woe and despair of this little brown citizen, bereft of all friends and friendships, as he stood there alone in the open street, deserted by his fellow-robber and last possible hope.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE UNINVITED GUEST.

ANY man who truly loves a good woman cannot be entirely a bad man.

This had been one of the sayings and teachings of Walton.

It was, in fact, one of his creeds of faith. But he found it hard to believe it strictly now, so hard to believe and live up to as he saw and patiently accepted the fact of Matherson's steadfast devotion to Hattie Lane.

He turned all the facts over and over in his mind. He put his precept to the severest test. And, after all, he had to admit that, with all the diabolical blackness of this man's heart, he had somewhere in him, according to his own saying and teaching, some saving grace. For surely he was and had been faithfully and constantly in love with this one noble and beautiful woman for a long time.

Here was a truly good woman. His enemy—his one mortal enemy, whom he had often wished to take by the throat, whom he still half believed he would some day murder, in love with this lady, truly, faithfully in love with her. He was perplexed. But he settled his hat only the more firmly back on his head, and lifted his face only more fairly before the world and up toward heaven as he accepted the facts, and as the days went by tried never so hard to be true to himself and his precepts.

And then again, what could he himself have done with all the wealth and splendor of this magnificent woman's love had it been his?

It begins to look, under the developments of civilization and the demands of the time, as if you should have a very large, fashionable, and well-furnished house to put a woman's love in.

Walton had not so much as a place to set a pot of flowers. It is true, the man out in the mines, his fellow-scribe and partner, still wrote glowing accounts of the vast possibility of the new mine. It is quite as true that he still simultaneously and regularly wrote for a little money to push the great enterprise.

An undiscovered and imaginary gold mine in the Rocky Mountains is hardly a fit marriage dowry for a fashionable young lady of New York.

If it were, we might have many weddings at very short notice. And so Walton could only wait, work on, take in his daily round of duties and of toil, and wait.

He had literally no diversions at all. It was only toil and duty. Even the great, full, round moon of Hope, which rises and rides forever in the heavens for us all, was for him setting far away in the west, dim, distant, and obscured.

Matherson, rich, handsome, elegant in all things, popular everywhere, hand and glove with the great men of the great city—this man's figure stood up tall and insolent forever now between him and the dim and distant light that was setting steadily, slowly, certainly away in the west.

Farewell, Hattie Lane! Farewell to the one fair woman forever!

As the season wore by and the cold and frosty days fell sharp and crisp, the world was once more devoting

itself to indoor pleasures here in the great and opulent city.

It began to be publicly whispered now that the railroad king, the magnate of all America, the one millionaire of all the millionaires, had at last fixed upon the day and date for the grandest ball that could be conceived.

Walton stopped eating his morning chop in the little down-town restaurant, laid down his paper, and thought a long time in silence when he read the announcement of his employer's purpose.

He knew that Matherson would be there, for he was one of the chosen friends of the great American king. He knew he would be there with Hattie Lane at his side in all her splendor, innocence ; the pure woman's heart would be full ; happiness would repose in her peerless, sweet face.

And he knew quite as well that he himself would be there ; that the great American millionaire, the king of all the kings, would require his presence there to record and set down the glory and the coming in and the going out of his following.

He knew his paper would require all this of him. It was a miserable position, a mean, hard position.

It broke his heart to think of it !

* * * * *

More than a week before the event took place, the one talked-of event, the one tremendous crush and desirable jam of the fashionable season, he was sent to the king's palace to write up and describe, in column after column of detail, the wonderful wealth, the luxury, the Solomon-like magnificence of this man, with his hundred millions and his two big, red hands and tightly closed fists.

Day after day, till all was entirely complete, he was ordered to keep at this work of description and detail, so

that nothing should be omitted on the grand occasion. Columns were already in type descriptive of this glorious ball days before it took place.

Dresses were described in detail to the last shade of color. Milliners' bills, which were sent forward and submitted to this patient and trusty scribe, were given, with curious and pretentious regard to extravagance. Money as a bribe was sometimes sent with these bills and descriptions from the owners and names of the dresses.

That this money was always returned promptly and untouched it is unnecessary to add.

It may be a matter worthy of note, however, to observe how impartially such vulgar-minded people were treated. You could see no spice of resentment in the scribe's description and praise of those who so insolently sought to purchase praise.

When the day, the hour, the very late hour at last arrived for the guests to pour in, all save the guests were heartily tired of it—so tired!

Walton was almost glad he was not a millionaire. He was certainly glad he was not such a millionaire as this one.

And yet this great millionaire did not seem, after all, an entirely bad man. He had hobbled about in a fat, helpless fashion all over the wonderful palace with the scribe day after day. He had been all kindness; he did not seem either so ignorant, or silly, or vulgar as he had sometimes thought him to be. It seemed, in fact, that, setting aside his pitiful vanity and vain folly in the glittering glories of his palace, and a firm determination to hold fast to all his millions with his big, fat hands, that he was a very fair and honest-hearted old man.

But, somehow, and for all his glory and love of it, he seemed at times unhappy, almost sad.

Sometimes he would stop, as he waddled wearily about pointing out his splendor to Walton, and stare out of his weak, red eyes, as if he saw strange things.

Let us hasten over the many details of this gorgeous and fashionable affair, which had been so elaborately described for a hundred great newspapers long before it transpired, and come to the singular, unbidden guest who came to the great ball and was the last to go.

It was after supper—and such a supper! The great railroad king, “the richest man in the world,” had sought out the most magnificent woman of all the most magnificent women there, to do honor and to delight himself with her sweet company.

With this lady on his arm, he was leading leisurely down the drawing-room, as if intent on showing her something more of his splendor and wealth farther on—perhaps a Meissonier on the wall of another gorgeous room.

He saw something!

The light which fell upon the gold and glory here was ample, surely. None could say it was the fault of the light. None could say that the light was doubtful or uncertain in the least.

But the great railroad king, the man who held tight on to a hundred million dollars with the two fat, red hands, stopped and stood still for a moment as he led Hattie Lane down the great drawing-room.

He stared as if he saw something strange and undesired. He stopped and stood and stared as Walton, who even now from another part of the room saw him, had seen him stop and stare when only they two together had walked these silken carpets, sat in these great chairs of leather and gold, or glanced at the priceless wealth on these walls.

Let us not permit ourselves to say that this man was a man who was entirely vulgar in his taste or his display of wealth. It is too much the custom to call such men vulgar, and to accuse all wealthy people of bad taste.

What is good taste? You can no more lay down a rule of taste for a man to build by than you can lay down a rule of taste for a flower to grow by.

There are thousands of flowers, and all so different.

Yet God made every one of them; and made every one in perfect taste. For my part, I like the gorgeous abundance and majestic assertion of the magnolia.

This house here, with its appointments and adornments, was of the magnolia order. Hattie Lane, indeed, the stately and matchless lady who leaned on the great man's arm as he stopped and stood there for an instant, was of the magnolia order of flowers.

And surely she, of all persons, was the last one in the world with whose presence you could associate even a suggestion of bad taste.

The millionaire stood still and immovable. It was only for an instant, however, that the man, with this beautiful woman on his arm, stopped and stood still and stared.

Then he led the beautiful lady forward rather doubtfully, and said to Hattie Lane as he did so :

"I don't know that man."

"What man?"

"There!"

"Where?"

The man turned with the lady on his arm, and came a little way back toward a great chair of leather and gold by a table, and said :

"Here."

"Why, where?"

"Here in this chair!"

The great millionaire put out his huge, fat, red right hand, and almost fell as he brought it down, as if to strike heavily on the back of a chair.

This chair was exactly like the huge leather and gold chair which sat just across on the other side of the table, with the gorgeous wealth of costly books and curios.

There was no one sitting there. There was no guest there to fill this great, luxurious chair.

However, in a moment, to all outward appearances at least, the millionaire recovered himself both in body and in mind.

It had at first occurred to Hattie Lane that it might somehow have been a reflection from some one of the French or Venetian mirrors in the splendid palace which had deceived him.

She threw out this suggestion in a few well-chosen and sympathetic words as they walked on, and, strange to say, it brought a world of relief to the man's troubled mind.

He took in a long breath then, and so they walked on as if nothing had happened.

Still, for all that, when the guests were gone, when the last of a thousand carriages had rolled away, and that silence which overtakes all seasons of excitement fell upon this imperial palace, with its one man holding his hundred millions tightly in his two fat, red, and helpless hands, he was lonely, so very, very lonely.

He was left entirely alone now. Not purposely so. His family and friends were true and loving enough. But there are moments following great scenes of excitement when you must somehow get away by yourself. There are moments after scenes like this ball when each one will, if possible, steal quite away to one's self for

half an hour or so, as if to collect one's self. The old biblical and human expression of a desire to "go up into the mountains to pray" had something of this feeling which overtakes us at such times as this.

It is an irresistible desire to get away from others and get back to your own identity, your own individuality.

The strong English expression of "pulling one's self together" means a great deal, but not quite what is meant here or in the Bible.

The lights burned not so brilliantly now that the guests were gone; but still there was light enough for the one lone man—light enough to drink by. A man does not require much light when he is weary and sleepy and sad.

He knew his valet would come soon and take him to bed. Maybe some one of the family would come to him there and talk with him for a little time of the splendid scenes, of the most brilliant ball that the world had ever witnessed.

No one came. His head settled a little on his breast. His two heavy red hands still rested on the great soft arms of the easy-chair, and the man was very comfortable. But only for a second. He seemed to feel rather than see that some one beside himself was sitting at that table. He filled his glass again.

The man with so many millions slowly lifted his head, slowly lifted his glass, slowly opened his eyes widely, steadily, and looked dimly across the table where had sat the imaginary guest an hour before.

He had not forgotten on what he had tried to place his heavy right hand only an hour before.

The guest had come back, and was there distinctly now. The millionaire did not cry out or lift a hand.

He did not even open his lips. He only set down the glass, untouched, and looked and looked !

Maybe he could not have cried out or even opened his lips to save his life if he had tried.

He sat there helpless, alone in the dim light, startled, terrified, fascinated, looking, staring—his eyes starting from his head, looking straight on, his wide mouth wide open. His eyes were fixed steadily and still on the great chair just opposite and its strange and shadowy occupant. He looked a long time.

And then at last he saw in the dim light that this guest was not empty-handed.

He could not see who or what manner of man was there.

In fact, the occupant of the chair did not seem to take any real form at first.

After a while, however, the millionaire, who had been a farmer in his day, seemed to vaguely recognize the figure and form of an old bent and decrepit farm-hand who had labored for and with him.

A great relief !

He was glad ! He had not been generous to this old farm-hand, nor to any one, indeed, as to that, till of late. But he promised himself that this old farm-hand, who had always been so old, and bent, and helpless, and tired-looking, he would now help most generously.

But how did he get in ?

And what was that which he had brought with him on his arm and shoulder ? Why was it hanging there ? What was it ? A scythe !

It was surely not haying or harvest time. There was snow on the ground outside. And yet this strange, silent, obtrusive, and crippled old farm-hand had surely brought his scythe with him !

The millionaire, holding so tight on to his one hundred millions with his two massive red hands, was about to speak, to cry out, to protest.

But just then the bent and bony old farm-hand reached out a long, fleshless arm, and set something down right in the centre of the table between them—right by the side of the untouched glass. Then he drew back his shadowy, fleshless arm and sat still.

He sat so silently and intently still, looking straight at that little something which he had set down there so silently and so mysteriously between them, that the great millionaire became more terrified than ever before.

The millionaire tried to move his hand, to lift it up and appeal in some way against this—all this.

It was horrible ! so horrible ! so still ! so terrible—all this !

He could not move his hand. He tried to move his foot. It was as if it weighed a thousand tons.

He tried to cry out. His lips refused to obey him.

It was as if all his heaps of gold weighed him down and held him still and helpless.

Suddenly and yet slowly the long, fleshless right arm of the bent and bony old man reached out and over the table and pointed at the little object which had been set down between them.

The long, fleshless fingers touched this.

The eyes of the millionaire fastened eagerly upon it. And then—oh, horror !

It was an hour-glass !

An hour-glass, and the sands were running fast and few !

There were but a dozen grains ! going ! going ! going !

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE APPARITION.

DAYS, weeks, months, swept by, but the memory of the stranger, the unbidden guest, the man with the scythe, would not pass away with them. The great millionaire felt that this man from Sable Land, where he had once lived, and about which clustered many a pleasant memory, would soon return. And he somehow felt that he would go away with him when he came again. Go where?

He did not know where this strange, silent man would go—where he would take him. He only felt certain that he would come to him again; come suddenly, silently as he had come before. And he as certainly knew that when he came again he would get up from his great gold and leather throne there in his grand palace, and leave all his money—all his millions of money—and follow him away. He knew he would follow on and on and on, somewhere. He felt certain that he would obey this silent stranger without one word of remonstrance. All the world, he knew, would obey him at this moment; but this silent man who had come and gone away seemed to be not of this world at all. He was of another world, and would come again. This vast and solemn certainty made a shadow on the walls and over the door and about the glittering hearthstone in the gorgeous palace.

More than once the master, the man whose great, big hands held tightly on to so many millions, bade the ser-

vants turn on more light. More than once the great man tried to drive away the sombre shadows from the gorgeous walls and from about the brilliant hearthstone. The shadow would not go away.

The great millionaire grew very miserable. He began, from his own misery, to be able to see the sorrows and the miseries of others. He gave a million suddenly, and to the surprise of the wondering world, to a great charity.

Out of a hundred millions and more this great man positively gave a million! Was the shadow at his shoulder? Had the silent and unbidden guest come again?

The great, red hands could not hold on forever to the hundred millions. This the whole world knew. The whole world knew, as he himself must have known—the whole world knew that the letting go of that hundred millions was only a question of time.

Was he already beginning to let go? Was Death already shaking loose the great, big, red hands from those millions?

One day, late in the afternoon, he sat in the great gold and leather chair asking for more light. The servants turned on all the lights that art or nature could provide.

Then suddenly again there was a laboring man standing before him in his gorgeous office and study. Then another came; and then another.

The great man took in a long breath of satisfaction, for he knew that Death never called in the company of any one.

He at once resumed all his old authority, and bluntly demanded of the three men what they were doing there.

The first of the three stepped forward, awkwardly twisting his hat in his broad and bony hands. He was a gaunt, lean, laboring man. His hands were dirty and

hard. His work was hard and dirty work. And then he had not had time to wash his hands in nearly twenty years.

The man, with his two companions at his back, began, as he twisted and twirled and pulled at his greasy slouch hat with his big, broad and dirty hands :

“ We uns has been sent to see yer, yer know. Yer told us, yer know, yesterday, to come to-day. We came to-day. What we uns has to say is this : We uns is the car-drivers that was true to yer all through. When the freight hands' strike came, we uns and the four hundred that we have come to yer to speak about did not take part. When the car-drivers' strike came we did not stop work, but kept right on. And we uns had to fight to keep right on. Bricks and stones and broken glass we had to face, gov'nor, to keep right on—eh, boys ?”

The two men at his back were greatly excited as he talked. One of them stopped twisting his hat a second, and lifted a finger to an ugly wound in the face ; while the other shrugged a shoulder, and looked earnestly and eagerly at the great millionaire with his only remaining eye. Evidently these men were all wounded veterans in the war for the rich man's interests. They had been sent, in all probability, by their fellow-laborers because of their wounds to plead the car-drivers' case with their great master. But they were not eloquent of tongue ; and they were too proud to show their wounds and let their wounds speak for them. Each man here before this man with the hundred millions was just that much more than a Coriolanus.

Beside that, each one of these three brave leaders had, long before, shouldered muskets and marched down to the greatest battles that the world has ever witnessed.

They had fought through the terrible campaigns for the freedom of the black man. But it was the white man that was enslaved now. They themselves were slaves. But they were not eloquent in their own cause. They were dull, sodden, stupid. They had not taken sides with any of the strikers against the rich men who employed them and for whom they had toiled on steadily for twenty years. Their discipline in the army had made them faithful men.

The awkward and helpless leader of the three who represented the hundreds of loyal followers away down in the slums of the great city began again :

“ We uns have worked for yer since my first baby was born—eh, boys ?”

Again the two men behind the leader nod their gray and storm-beaten old heads and hitch their awkward bodies a little closer up toward their leader, as he continues :

“ An’ now that baby is growed up, an’—an’ gone—gone where ? Well, gov’nor, yer see I didn’t git pay’nough of yer to edicate her, or have time’nough to look after her. Sixteen hours a day is too much, gov’nor. An’ that’s what we came to talk about. That’s what we said to yer long ago, an’ yer said, ‘ Be faithful to me.’ Yer said, ‘ Be good boys an’ stick to me till the storm blows over an’ the strike is done, an’ then come to me, an’ I’ll stand by yer.’ An’ now we’ve come—eh, boys ?”

Again the man with the battered face and the herculean cyclops hitch themselves along a little closer to their leader. They are eager to hear what the great millionaire is going to say.

“ Well, yes, I said you should come. Now what do you want ?”

"What do we want, gov'nor? We don't want sixteen hours, nor fifteen, nor fourteen, nor twelve. We want less time an' more money, or we strike! A young man might stand on his pegs a dozen years or so a dozen hours a day; but an old man like me an' my battered old pards can't stand it, gov'nor. The pegs gien out, gov'nor. The pegs git paralyzed, an' a man lies down after his sixteen hours a day, an' don't git up ag'in, gov'nor—no, sir, don't git up ag'in. He can't; he has a apoplexy. A wagon comes up the alley; a little, red pine box; the Pauper's Island, gov'nor."

The great man had risen to his feet as the veteran old car-driver, who had helped make him so great, began to talk loud and threatened to strike.

This loud talk made him strong and resolute. He was not a coward. He was not afraid of any man or anything that would talk or grow stormy. He was only afraid of the silent and mysterious man from Sable Land who had come all alone, and been so terribly, fearfully, deathly silent.

He had put a big, red hand behind him as he arose. The big forefinger had touched a little golden button, unseen and unobserved by the rude and awkward orator before him.

As the orator ceased to take breath and gather courage from his eager companions at his back, four strong men hastily and silently entered the gorgeous office close behind the orator and his two friends.

Not a word was said; only a sign from the large commanding millionaire as he saw his men enter.

The battered old veterans turned their gray old heads. Their eyes met those of the elegant, strong and well-fed body-guard, and that was all. Their eyes fell to the floor, and mechanically they slowly and doggedly, like

well-trained slaves, moved toward the door by which they had entered; and so on and out again into the street.

It is not worth while to follow these three leaders now farther than to record the fact that the strikers that night enrolled them and all their honest and industrious following. And this was the beginning of the end of Gotham.

As for the great millionaire, he felt that he had done only his duty. What right had these men to hold him to his word? He had done enough for them. Had he not given them employment for years? Had he not distributed many costly presents as well as much money annually among his chief officers? True, these presents did not reach down among the poor to any extent, but they had their work, their fifteen and sixteen hours a day. Was that not enough for the miserably poor?

But, somehow, the great, rich man was not at all tranquil at heart. The darkness grew more dense. He all the time wanted light. And then he often found himself thinking of strange things.

Once he fell to thinking of the one rich man who was mentioned in the Bible. And why was he mentioned in the Bible? Merely to mention the fact that he was down in hell, crying out to a beggar up in heaven for a single drop of water!

One day his favorite officer, a so-called friend, a fawning, cheap fellow, who flattered him for his millions, and ate generously of the crumbs from his bounty, entreated with him for an interview.

The interview was granted. But this interview was merely for the purpose of requesting an interview for a third party.

Permission was kindly granted, although he felt or

believed that this third party was no friend. He feared him, somehow. He knew him to be a large and generous man, a great man. There was no reason he should fear him. But he began to dread and to fear all men. He feared—ah ! how terribly he feared, that the man with the scythe might come back from Sable Land.

The fawning and sycophantic friend was in great spirits. He had been making money ; the great millionaire had also been making money. The sycophantic friend was full of wonder that the millionaire was not as light-hearted and as happy as he. Why, the millionaire had made millions of money in the last few months, enough to have made all his car-drivers happy and saved their children from shame ; why was he not glad ?

After a while the sycophantic friend turned to go. At the last moment he turned back to say that the great man who had desired to see him so much would maybe come direct from Sable Land !

The great hands clutched. The lips closed tight and turned blue. The great millionaire was not learned in classic stories ; but, somehow, a vague memory of Brutus in his tent on the eve of his last battle, and the shadowy figure there was before his eyes all the time as he went about his great house.

From the first time he had seen the strange and unwelcome guest with the scythe he had felt that the shadow was over his earthly path forever. He had been trying hard to open his hands. The force of habit could not easily be overcome. He had hoped, however, to yet open his hands wide open before the shadowy form should come again. Little merit in giving is there, he knew very well, after you are forced to give. When death shakes your hands loose from all you hold on earth it is death that gives, not you. The great man knew this

very well ; and so he was trying hard, so hard, to open his hands. Do not blame him so much ; but pity him greatly.

The man was coming from Sable Land. He tried to shake off the certain feeling that this man, or the shadow of this man, would bear a scythe on his shoulder. But for all that he went bravely about the duties and obligations of life as best he could. There were some churches to be looked after. He went about this gladly, generously. Oh, if he could only open his hands wide, wide open, he felt that it would be better for him, better for the world !

There were some people who wanted autographs. He gave them obligingly. One poor bed-ridden lady, away off in a distant region, received an autograph that made her almost rich. Some people wanted photographs. Surely, the man had some friends ! Some people wanted an image of the great millionaire in marble and in brass. He was also obliging in this.

And then the hour came for the man from Sable Land.

Cold and formally he came. He entered the splendid palace, sat down in the gorgeous office, looked strangely at the hard, fixed features of the suffering and silent man before him, and wondered at his misery.

“What are you going to do on Sable Land ?”

“I am going to sow it with fire ; and I shall harvest gold.”

And as the visitor spoke, the shadow of the man with the scythe rose up dimly in the rear of where he sat and came still more near to the great man, who strained his eyes to see.

“Sable Land was my home, and I love the place. I may go back there some day.”

The visitor laid a map between them, and began to point out the place where he should plough his furrows of fire.

The millionaire leaned forward. The visitor leaned forward. The shadowy figure came close up behind. The shadowy figure with the scythe leaned forward, looked over the visitor's shoulder, and put a finger down on the centre of the map. The finger took the form of an hour-glass !

The millionaire leaned forward, strained his eyes to see, fell forward, the hands fell from him. The great, heavy hands, so full of gold, rolled off, right and left, and hung down at his side, wide open ; wide open and empty for the first time. The great American millionaire was dead.

CHAPTER XIX.

"THE PUBLIC."

TURN back to the great dead man, sitting with head thrown back and his massive, heavy hands hanging down on either side, and, to the amazement of the world, wide open.

When a buffalo, the noblest native beast of America, falls dead on the plains, you soon begin to see little black specks in the sky.

At first these little black specks, away up in the deep blue sky, seem no larger than gnats.

Then they grow to the dimensions of bats, and are circling round and round; descending a little at every circle; growing nearer and nearer, larger and larger, till you can at last see their long necks reaching out and looking down, down, down as they descend.

These are buzzards. And too, when this monarch of the plains falls, and is surely dead, securely and certainly dead, there comes creeping stealthily over the hill, his sharp little nose sniffing blood, his big bushy tail between his legs and trailing on the ground as he creeps and sneaks along, the dirty little prairie wolf.

This little sneaking wolf, this natural thief of the plains, will have his teeth in the dead beast's haunches in less than five minutes, while the buzzards are picking out his eyes.

And then the larger wolves come: a long, black line, streaming and stringing over the low hills through the

long, strong grass, their red tongues out and their white teeth glistening, sharp and eager for their work.

By and by you see bugs, loathsome, buzzing bugs, that make a droning, solemn sound as they go by your ear or strike you full in the face.

They, too, will have a share of the dead monarch, and will burrow in his skin, and finally roll and revel and rear their young in the offal when all others have gone away.

And this is the pitiful end of the greatest brute of the plains.

Man's estate, if there is nothing of him but the brute, nothing of him but his gold and great strong-box, is no better. And why, indeed, should he be?

If man, endowed by his Creator with all the better qualities, will permit himself to sink to the level of the brute, and live only for the animal that is in him, his gold, his business, and his lands, he should not complain at all if, in the end, he and all that is his are torn to pieces and divided up among the wolves, the buzzards, the bugs, the vilest following on this earth.

* * * * *

In this limited portion of the limitless and tremendous city we have swept on rapidly, too rapidly to note all the important events which have an important bearing on the disposition of the colossal fortunes so suddenly accumulated.

One little act out of which came great calamity—if calamity it may be called—must here be noted.

The two inseparable old gentlemen whom we encountered in the early pages of this work, hidden away in the Custom House, were neither idle men nor ignorant.

But they were in exile, as it were—banished from the heights of Murray Hill to the other end of the island. As we have seen, they did not succeed in holding on to

their very lucrative positions in the great Custom House. Wall Street has vanquished them ; and a too-willing disposition to lay hands on the public purse, in order to keep their heads above water, had forfeited all foothold even here ; and so they had fallen into the muck and mire of the lowest round of politics.

You should have seen these two worthies in the " Palladium of Liberty," talking face to face and familiarly with thieves, burglars, aldermen. They were conspicuous even as mourners over the bodies of the two illustrious burglars who had shot each other to death in this same resort, where is laid the first round in the not very long ladder which reaches to the Presidency of these United States.

From their position here these men with their education, experience, aristocratic names, and early associations, guided legislation at the State capital. These low haunts, with their swarms of ignorant, vicious, and grasping legislators, held a balance of power. And yet it cannot be said that they always introduced and supported vicious measures.

* * * * *

A bill had this last session been passed, as the session drew to a close, with the avowed purpose of breaking up and reforming these same low haunts.

It had been drawn by " Colonel " Carrol. It was passed through and made a law by the rural members, who wished to catch the train on the closing evening of the session.

This law declared that property on which a false return to the tax assessor was made should be forfeited to the city. It had been urged by the member introducing this bill that keepers of " dives " and " dens " in the great city not only refused to pay taxes, as assessed, but per-

sisted in giving false returns. He had proclaimed that a forfeiture of the property here was most just ; that by this means these " dens " and " dives " would fall into the hands of the city, and so be closed up and the atmosphere purified.

He urged that the only way to bring about this was to make the informer a sharer in this forfeiture, and that a false return to the assessor under oath should work a forfeiture of the property involved ; that this should be shared between the informant and the city. Ah ! here was to be a great and a good reform. It would break up every low " den " and " dive " in the lowest and most desperate haunts of the great city.

That the law was unconstitutional was of little consequence, since so great a reform was to be wrought. And beside that, an unconstitutional law was no new thing !

And so, in the name of reform, the bill which " Colonel " Carrol and his inseparable comrade had drawn in the " Palladium of Liberty " down among the " dives " was laid like a new-born babe to sleep for a day in the statute-book and wake up a giant. And it awoke suddenly one morning when all the lower end of the great city was wild—crazy in a great strike.

When it had been known that the man with a hundred millions sat dead in his gold and leather throne, with his two hands hanging down, wide open and empty, the little black specks in the sky began to be distinctly visible.

And then the little prairie wolves began to appear on the scene, and reach out their long, sharp noses and sniff in the air.

The big wolves, too, came streaming down the hills and up the valleys ; and before the body was cold they were fighting over it in the grand house on the avenue,

with all its gorgeous embellishments, as wolves of the plains fight over the fallen buffalo.

The poor, dead body, with the large, empty, heavy hands now closed and folded forever, holding nothing but dust forever, had been laid away in a great granite tomb, while the black wolves, the heirs, glared at each other. They had gone back from the door of the tomb growling at each other and showing their sharp teeth.

They rushed together to the great, empty palace of gold, and seized upon this thing and that, as the wolves of the prairie seize upon this and that part of the fallen beast.

And how could the great dead man have expected anything else? They were only following his example; walking in his footsteps. He had done this same thing before over his own inheritance! He had fought brother and sister also, even to the death.

Bigger wolves of a baser kind; that was all! And finally, when the strife was high and hot and fierce; when the press and the whole land was filled with this strife and struggle for the dead man's gold; when the courts were choked in the administration of justice, and all things stood still from the very magnitude of this corpse that had fallen down in the road, and lay here in the way—when these wolves lay exhausted and glaring at each other, the voice of "Colonel" Carrol, the exile, was heard from the "Palladium of Liberty," firing the hearts of the hungry railroad employés, car-hands, drivers, and freight-hands against the claimants of this colossal wealth. The new-born babe that had been hastily laid to sleep on the statute-books had suddenly wakened up a full-grown giant.

It had been developed somewhere in the dozen trials, the criminations and the recriminations, and on the in-

formation of "Colonel" Carrol and his thousand and one desperate and starving followers that false returns had been persistently indulged in by the great millionaire.

By this same law, passed for the poor and for the annihilation of the low haunts, the rich man, in the most aristocratic part of the city, had forfeited his houses.

"Colonel" Carrol proclaimed to all he had forfeited his lands, his houses, his millions to the city and the thousand and one destitute and desperate men in the low walks of the great commercial capital of the world! This is what he urged at the "Palladium of Liberty."

The absurdity of the claim, the illegality of it, made no difference. It was a claim.

The very illegality of it, indeed, made the desperate claimants more desperate, more determined.

It was little use that the heirs—the wolves—now forgot their battle, put their backs and shoulders together, and faced and fought the mob—the people, the public.

These desperate men were not to be put off. Here was a law which they said the poor had received from the rich. Let it be applied alike to all. They would brook no delay. No courts! no appeals to higher courts!

The law was plain! Let it be enforced! By the enforcement of this law the other end would have the wealth of the city!

Do you suppose that the other end of the city, the ignorant million there outnumbering tenfold the upper end of the town, was to be put off with any promise or any appeals?

You do not know the public, the people, if you think that. Why, every one of these poor had in some sense helped heap up this hundred million for this one man, who all this time paid little taxes—almost nothing.

And they were going now, since the heirs had fought so savagely over it, to fight also over it, or have something of it back. The strike for higher wages and for work had united them solidly. And these poor and ignorant and overworked people were now right willing to reach out their hands at a minute's notice.

- The people had endured much. These people, many of them—and you cannot stop at a time like this to separate the deserving people from the undeserving people—had endured persecutions, insults—everything.

They had begged for better pay, for fewer hours. They had seen their little children die in the long, hard, and perfectly well-ordered and regular strike, while they stood by with tied hands and helpless, because of the millionaire's brutality, false promises, false oaths—aye, the false oaths of the mighty millionaire whose property they now claimed was in a measure forfeited to them.

Do you suppose their hands were to be stayed now? Why, many of them had been waiting for years for even the slightest excuse to lay hand upon the least part of this heaped-up hundred millions.

A thousand men marched to the splendid mansion, burst open the massive doors, and hungry hands tore down tapestries and canopies, massive and weighty with gold. And the public, the police, stood by powerless, consenting, abetting.

The nails of gold, and the bars of gold, and the rings of gold that held the curtains or bound the furniture or starred the thrones of leather and gold, they melted away like fairy frost-work before the rising sun.

Old Irish beggar-women wrapped the costliest canopies around their frail and emaciated forms, and glided like ghosts down the back streets to their reeking haunts.

A laborer bore on his shoulders a massive pitcher of

solid gold ; his wife bore a leather ottoman studded with nails of gold, and, uninterrupted, they leisurely led their child between them down the avenue that afternoon.

And no man raised a hand. Do not be surprised. The wrong, the long and persistent wrong had been none the less keenly felt because endured in silence.

The whole people were with the people. The public was with the public.

* * * * *

The first three words of the Constitution of these United States are to-day the most potent, just, sacred words outside of Holy Writ.

They are the foundation and the corner-stone of the country. Of old time it was written that the king can do no wrong. Here we have changed it the least bit. Here the people are the king. It now reads thus : The people can do no wrong.

"The people" had done this pilfering ; scattered this wealth to the four winds. "We, the people," had done this as a part of one of their well-ordered strikes. And "we, the people," can do no wrong. Read these first three words of the Constitution of these United States, and understand them well ; for on these hang all the law and the prophets.

CHAPTER XI.

TWILIGHT THOUGHTS.

* * * * *

THERE is surely some sort of compensation in all things. Once when camped on the plains—the night was cold and clear—our camp-fire died out, and we began to suffer greatly from the cold.

But suddenly some one looked up, saw the stars, and we forgot the misery of earth in contemplating the glory of the heavens.

One thing more : we have many duties in this life, not many rights.

When you hear any one talk continually of his rights, you may be sure he is very forgetful of his duties.

The real text is, do your duty, and your rights will take care of themselves.

You need never fight for your rights, if you first look to your duties.

No one with spirit ought to ask to eat his bread before he earns it.

* * * * *

These thoughts may have been taken from Walton's journal ; for he, too, had tried the mines, the mountains, many enterprises and plans in his youth, and now, in his middle-age, picked out these precepts to lean upon from his experience ; for he had little else, poor fellow ! to lean upon now.

The camp-fire of his love upon earth was dying out—

was indeed dead. He tried hard to lift his face to a higher light. It was very hard to keep it lifted there. His success was but indifferent in teaching himself to obey his own precepts and teachings.

He tried to do his duty, and so tried to forget his rights ; for really there are but two classes on this earth : one that thinks only of duties, the other that thinks only of rights.

And of the two classes no wise person can hesitate to choose between, for friends, for lovers, for cultivated and capable souls of any kind worth keeping sacred in the heart.

This man's life, like that of nearly all the toilers of the great city, lay far down-town. His work was there from the first. But now that she was passing out of his life entirely, to be happy with another, he somehow did not seem to care for Murray Hill so much.

Hundreds of thousands of good people lived away down there in the din and the darkness of the narrow streets. Why not he ?

Of course you understand that people who have met in society and subsequently meet outside of society do not presume on any old relations at all ; but they begin all over again. Perhaps more equitably than is the converse of these sentiments :

"What ! you here, Brown !" is no longer a permissible expression of surprise when Smith, the butcher, meets Brown, the baker, on Murray Hill. They may vaguely recognize each other as having possibly met in their travels abroad last year, and Brown, in his surprise at seeing Smith there, may mention in a loud and confidential whisper to the hostess that he knew him when he wore a long apron with blood running down it, and Smith may return the compliment in kind ; but no well-

bred butcher, or baker, or candlestick-maker is permitted to carry the smell of the shop up the high steps of the brown-stone fronts on Fifth Avenue now as a rule.

One day Walton said to a fellow-scribe, after he had seen Stone shivering along the street after he had lost all his money in speculation : "Look here ; I can prove to you that there is a God, and a just and generous God, too."

"How?" said the fellow-scribe, looking up from under the sharp gas-jet which shot out from the wall like a lance at his head.

"Two great men robbed a great country, and so had great wealth."

"Well?"

"Then one of these great men robbed the other to some extent, and so one was very, very poor, and one was very, very rich."

"Well?"

"Then God put out His hand, struck the rich one dead, and so left the destitute one—who has nothing to live for—creeping along yonder like a shadow, shivering in the frosty twilight."

The fellow-scribe put the blunt end of his pencil in his mouth, bit at it a time or two, hit his heels on the rung of the stool on which he sat, and then, nodding thoughtfully to his friend, went on with his work.

* * * * *

The death of the very rich man may have given a temporary pleasure to the little brown and leathery creature who had so long been his rival and stood so long next in importance in the eyes of the great, greedy, and money-getting city ; but the reaction and second sober thought left him even more cold and shivery and dismal than ever before. "What is the matter with Stone?"

This was a question heard many times and in all places. Was he afraid that the mob that had sacked the millionaire's house would pay its respects to him also ? Or did he really have the shrewdness to see above all the mutterings of the people something of the ruin that was in the air ?

For the people were not only desperate, but really destitute, notwithstanding their recent spoils. But, for whatever reason, Stone went about as cold, as silent, as soulless as a corpse.

"What is the matter with Stone ?"

A young man holding on to the tape and watching to see if Wabash, which had tumbled from 95 to 5, would really tumble down to the capacity of his pocket, looked up.

"What is the matter with Stone ?" I said.

"Budge."

The other looked at him, and then quaffed a glass in pantomime. And the man with the tape in hand merely nodded and continued his quotation from Shakespeare :

"The fiend says Budge ; but conscience says Budge not."

CHAPTER XXI.

"WE, THE PEOPLE."

It would have astonished the dead man, could he have returned, or by any means rolled away the great stone that shut him in his massive granite tomb, to see how easily all his work and all his wealth had melted away.

It even would have disgusted him to see how easy, to see how unconcerned the whole world was while his pictures, his carpets, his thousand costly things were being trampled under foot that day by a savage, industrious, hungry, but rather well-behaved mob.

It was, perhaps, due to the great millionaire's memory that some arrests should have been made, some attempt at restitution.

If so, the great dead millionaire's memory did not in this case receive its dues.

"How poor he was!" said Walton, sharpening his pencil.

"Poor?" queried a young scribe up under the gas-jet in the garret, as they two together were quietly writing the chronicles of the pillage.

"Poor?"

"Yes, poor."

"How so?"

"Why, he had nothing in the world but wealth, had he?"

The young scribe looked at his companion a moment, and understood.

* * * * *

The pencils drove on swiftly over the brief chronicle of the great man's life and death, and the destruction of his estate. The reporters of the press had dined comfortably, thankfully, on thirty-five or fifty cents each, such of them as had dined. Some of them had not dined at all. But you may put it upon record that little, if any, injustice was done to the dead.

Nay, more, you may say that the search for good deeds to set down in his behalf was none the less zealous because ineffectual.

True, many speculated as to what they would have done with a little of the dead man's gold, and it is safe guessing to say that few would not have acted more justly and wisely with it than did the man who always and up to the last desperate gasp clutched so tightly to everything that his hands closed upon.

"I should have built a city," said Walton, biting the dull end of his pencil, and trying to look the glaring gas-jet in the eye, when he had finished.

"Built a city! We have too many now. I hate them, and am going out on the plains to join your partner in his persistent demands on you for revenue," laughed his companion, as he lifted his face and looked away out and away to rest his tired eyes.

"Just where I should have built my city," said Walton; "and it would have been a city that is a city, not this kind. Why, I should have gone into the heart of a desert, bored into the earth for water, flooded all the parched alkali country for fifty miles around, with little cost or trouble; planted trees, grass, gardens; had my city in the centre, with its one good church, its one great

newspaper, its one great hotel, its one great railroad depot, its one great store, its one great theatre, and—and—”

“And been its one great millionaire and tyrant,” cried his companion.

They looked at each other, and, laughing feebly, fell to thinking each for himself, and half pitifully of the weakness and helplessness of human nature.

And away down in his heart each began to wonder if he was not a worse man in his boasted pride of poverty, a worse man by a great deal than the dead millionaire whom he had so long affected to despise.

Walton was trying hard to be unselfish. He arose, and going to the window to look out into the cold and frost, and rest his weary eyes a little, he looked away across to a dim light, where, in the tower of the tenement-house, he knew a little tobacco girl was toiling on, and had toiled on through all this outbreak of the mob, scarcely hearing about it at all.

He resolved in his heart he must see Dottie, now that the tumult was over, and soon. He had not seen her for days and days. And indeed when he saw her last, or rather heard her, for she would not come to the door or leave her work back in the corner now where she was toiling so steadily, she seemed not at all strong.

Even the light looked feeble now, he thought.

Resolving firmly in his heart to see her and the little Dollie, who always met him at the door, he turned back to his companion, and went on with the desultory conversation in a more moderate and conciliatory tone.

“The city I would build,” he said, “would not be a city of trade or business at all. We would all work there, till the soil in the new fields, have no salaried officers, no paid police, nobody working for pay, all working for the

good of his fellows. Two hours a day would do it ; two hours' work a day all around, my dear boy, would keep us all like kings. Oh, for a city like that, my boy ! Where and when will we ever see a city like that ?"

His companion smiled quietly, did not speak, but, after looking in Walton's face for a moment, lifted his eyes heavenward.

Then they both laughed heartily, and, dropping the dead man and all his money, went on with their work.

As you may have inferred from the character of the man, Hattie Lane was not left a fortune at all, not a cent. But the friendship and the favor of the millionaire toward the man it was supposed she would marry in the end had made Matherson prodigiously wealthy, and a man of boundless influence in the great American city. And this may have been the way in which the dead man chose to enrich the dependent child of his old friend.

Day by day, as said before, steadily, year by year and month by month, Walton had seen her fading out of his life, as a star passes out of sight when the clouds gather.

Many a time he had thought her gone entirely from his horizon and gaze ; thought he had forgotten her ; as he hoped and tried—prayed, to forget her. But, then, fate would throw them together again, their streams of life would flow on, and in the course of his work he would be brought full in sight of that calm and splendid face of hers, and then down on his knees—to use a figure of speech—he would fall helplessly before her, and be all broken to pieces again for days and days together.

Man is not put together solidly. The light of a woman's eye, if he loves her truly, can melt him all through, as if he were put together with wax.

Still Walton had long and hourly devoted himself to the duty of forgetting to love this woman. It was clearly

his duty to forget her; not a duty to himself, but to her. Had it been a duty to himself, he had, no doubt, long since abandoned it. As it was, he was bravely trying, and with not very certain success, to perform that duty which he owed to the woman he loved truly and well.

There are men in this world who have but two sources of delight, and very doubtful delights they are at best. One of these is the elevation of themselves, and the other is the downfall of others.

Capital is a snail that shuts up tightly in its house, and will be trodden all to pieces at the least sign of alarm, rather than put out its horns to help itself.

* * * * *

These were in substance the last sentiments which the reporter wrote that night before throwing down his pencil and climbing to the dim light in the top of the tenement.

It was much to lift his face to the high, dim light away up there, and know that little Dollie was waiting for him at the toothless old door; and he was very eager to climb up to the top and receive his welcome.

Better is a hearty welcome from the poorest dog than a doubtful reception from a king in purple.

When there is no one waiting to welcome us in this world any more, then it is time to die.

Walton had grown old in honest toil, and yet he had no one in all this world waiting for him but a little waif, and the toiling, sickly mother back in the corner, whom he had befriended up in the park long before. And he could not afford to despise this now in his loneliness and desolation of heart.

It might have been a fancy, but, somehow, he kept constantly associating the feebleness of that light up there with Dottie's own life.

Was she, too, growing faint and feeble as was the light away up there? Were they dying out together? And the baby? What if the mother should die alone up there in the cold among the rats in the musty and mouldy tobacco? What would become of the child so alone up there then?

CHAPTER XXII.

VERY TIRED.

As before said, Walton had never entered the little tobacco girl's room on the top floor after that first time when the pale, thin girl had gone away to never come back any more.

He would call at the door, say a few cheery words to Dottie as she plied her fingers and bent above her work back by the window, and would not stay long.

He had so little time to stay ! And, then, one gets very tired in these dismal parts of the city—so tired in body and in soul !—and if you do not sit down you cannot stay, even if you desire to.

There is a haunting desire to pass on, however good and sympathetic you may be ; and you do pass on, at any reasonable excuse.

Walton, now that he was on his way there, felt that he had been negligent, too, in his calls of late. At first it was every day, and at a certain hour, too ; and he always had fruit, cool and juicy and fresh from the country, not stale and thumbbed and withered fruit that had been passed and passed from hand to hand till it had neither flavor nor freshness, but real, genuine, juicy fruit that spoke of the country, the birds, and the trees. As poor little Dottie used to call out from her corner back by the window when the child ran to her with the paper, it was "fruit that was fruit."

But the terrors of the time, the strike, the mob, the

destruction of the great brown-stone palace—these had kept him away.

The visits had long since grown far apart and irregular. On this last occasion he had been absent nearly a week.

The man reproached himself bitterly when he remembered his cruel neglect. He sprang up from his work, ran down the dark, paper-strewn and ink-stained stairway which wound up to where the red gas-jet shot like lances into your eyes from the wall, and hastened to the lonely little girl who for months, in her terror and shame and dread of being pursued or punished, had seen no stranger's face but his.

The fruit was not forgotten this time, although the man was still, as usual, very poor. The partner in the mines was still about to "strike it," and so was still pleading glorious prospects for his exactions.

He pushed open the door with neither lock nor key at the top. It creaked and cried out, and seemed to mock and reproach him. No one sat back between him and the light near the window.

The man started with alarm. He pressed the door wide open, ruthlessly entered, and took two or three steps forward and a little to the left, in the direction of a small screen which had been fashioned there on two iron hooks, out of a piece of coarse bale-cloth.

"Come in, Mr. Walton."

"What! Dottie, are you ill?"

"No, no; I'm not ill; but I'm so tired!"

The voice was strange and weary and far away. It was as if one spoke from away down in a deep well. The child lay asleep in her arms at her side. The girl explained as the man stood over her that Dollie had been sitting up with her the last two nights, bringing water and watching with her, and so was all worn out.

"And then, Mr. Walton, and then you know she—she has to—to—"

"She has to what, Dottie? You seem so frightened. Tell me what it is, girl?"

"Why—why, it's nothing much, if I was only well. But I've been so frightened, and she has been so frightened. And they are so large and hungry, too. At first we fed them, and then they were not so bold; but it only made more come, and now—"

"Dottie! Dottie! what is it? What are *they*?"

"Look there—back there in the corner by the door! And see, there is another one! Oh, I know some time they will eat us up! You see, I put tobacco-stems here, around Dollie's side of the bed. That will keep them from eating her first. And then the tobacco makes it a little softer. Yes, it made her sick at first; but she stood it all, poor thing, for she was so afraid of them. And then I put a lot of the stems at our feet, too. But oh, I know—I know they will bite our feet and our faces when—when—"

"Dottie, it's the old foolish fear. Now be calm. Rats don't bite people, not live people, I reckon."

"But—but they do dead people, Mr. Walton."

"Well, you are not dead, Dottie."

"No, I am not dead; but—but I'm so—so tired and—and—and—"

She stopped a moment, for she spoke with great effort. The man stamped and made a shuffling noise with his foot to drive away the rats that were already coming from many directions, reaching their noses, their necks, smelling for the savory bag of fruit he had set down on the little table. The girl arose on her elbow, and, taking great care not to disturb the sleeping child, felt under the bag of rags which she had fashioned into a

pillow, and drew forth a little package. She laid this into the man's hand, with a smile on her pale, pitiful face that made her once more seem radiant and beautiful. The old sparkle and splendor of her wonderful eyes illumined them for an instant, and she was as one who enjoys for a little time some great triumph.

"I've not got on well in the great city, Mr. Walton. And I've been some trouble to you. But I tried hard; I did my best. And I've been living here, thinking it over and over and over, and at last it seems to me that when one does their best that—that—that is all."

"But what is this?"

"Don't you know? Money, silver. I made them pay me in silver, so that the rats would not carry it off. Oh, these queer rats! They don't care a cent for silver nor tobacco. But, oh—oh, I know they will eat me yet! And so I want you to take that money and get me—get me—"

"Get you what, Dottie?"

"Why, you see, I don't want to be left here when I'm dead."

"Dottie! Dottie! you will wake Dollie if you tremble and shudder so. You are not going to die."

"You think not, Mr. Walton? Well, I'm so glad! You were always wise and cool in your head."

"Now, Dottie, child, do lie down. You don't doubt what I say?"

"No, no; but I—I want to say something before Dollie wakes; for oh, she is so old now! Why, she knows everything, and she understands everything. She has grown old—old—old—sitting here and waiting—waiting for—for—"

"For what, Dottie?"

"Death!"

The girl said this in the faint, far-away voice which had so startled the man when he first came in.

Her face was to the wall. Then she went on, calmly :
“And I want you to take the money and keep it ; and when—when it’s all over, don’t let me lie here. Oh, take me out of this at once, right off ; and don’t let them that took her on that black boat in the pale, red coffin—don’t let them take me that way, as they did her !”

“Dottie, Dottie ! please don’t talk so.”

“And one thing more. Do you think, Mr. Walton—do you mind doing it, Mr. Walton ?”

“What, Dottie ?”

“Why, taking her to him, to—to— Oh, I *can’t* tell you ! But yet I must—I *must* ! Well, there is a man who wants her, because—because she is good and beautiful and true and pure and holy. Oh, my little baby, Dollie, Dollie, Dollie ! How good and kind and patient and loving you have been to me !”

For the first time the girl burst into tears. This was her one thought now : What should she do with little Dollie now, as she was going to leave her and go out over the river of everlasting dreams ? She hid her face down by the baby’s face, and sobbed and sobbed, and drew up her thin, bony shoulders and sobbed again and again, as if her heart would break and she should never be able to lift up her head or speak to the man any more.

He, too, was speechless now. Tears were streaming down the deep furrows of his rugged face.

At last she was very still.

All in the dismal room, this place where she was to receive the King of Terrors, was now so deathly still that the rats again made bold to sally out and attempt to climb the table.

You could hear their toe-nails and claws tap the floor as they crept stealthily across, lifting their noses, wriggling their long gray mustaches, snapping their glittering little black eyes, drawing their snake-like tails close and hard along the floor. A heavy movement of the foot, and the reptile forms around and under the little fruit bag fell back.

The little face lifted at last in the dying light, and the girl was calm and dispassionate as she went on feebly again :

"Of course, Mr. Walton, I am not going to die now, if you say I am not ; but, at the same time, I have thought it all over and over, and I have decided to ask you when I do die to—to take Dollie straight to—to a— a Mr. Matherson—a man I know, Mr. Walton—and ask him if he does not want to take her and raise her and be good to her."

The man bit his lips, and again found excuse to bring his foot heavily to the floor, as if to frighten away the rats that still persisted in trying to climb to the little paper bag of fruit on the table. Then the girl went on, and as if almost to herself :

"Yes, that is best. For he wants her. Oh, yes, Mr. Walton, I have heard he wants a little girl ; yes, a little girl just like this. I know he wants her. I know it, I—I—"

She broke down again, and taking a stained and tattered handkerchief from under her pillow, she coughed and sobbed and cried till the child awakened with a start, and sat bolt upright in bed at her side.

The little thing did not cry, did not rub even her eyes on awakening. She instantly was awake, wide and frightfully awake.

She did not see Walton, who stood a little back in the

darkness. But she sprang out of her little nest of tobacco-stems and started at once for the rats. They retreated from her but slowly.

Then she came back, or rather turned about ; and, as she did so, her nostrils, too, took in the rare fragrance of the fruit.

She ran to the table, and catching up the paper with a singular cry of delight, a cry that was more that of a bird in exultation than that of a human being, she hastened with it to her mother. And how they ate ! she holding the bag all the time to her breast, only lifting her eyes to Walton, not saying one word.

She had no time to talk. How long had she gone without food ? No one knows.

The night was far spent, and darkness possessed the place. The rats had stolen the wick from the lamp. The little piece of candle had been carried away by these same pitiless vermin. They were filling the room now. Walton took up the pits and parings of the now consumed fruit, and threw every vestige out of the window, and then drove the rats away savagely.

He had much to do at his desk up under the flaming gas-jets, and must be going to his work at once ; but how could he leave these helpless, dying creatures alone ?

A thought struck him. He sat down on the table as mother and child sank to sleep in each other's arms, and, whipping out pencil and pad, he began his work. He wrote page after page, piling up his work, even in the darkness. Only the driving of his pencil and the rattle of the leaves, as he finished page after page, could be heard.

At last, when he could delay not a moment longer, he started out on tiptoe and hastened to the office with long, strong strides, so as to deliver his work by the first break of day.

CHAPTER XXIII.

“WHOSE CHILD IS THIS?”

It is a hard place, this New York, to keep engagements, even with yourself. Walton meant to return at once. There are hundreds of thousands of men who dine, or rather breakfast, in this great city on a meal made up of one quarter chop, one quarter bread and coffee, and two quarters newspaper.

Breadstuffs may go up or down, banks may fail, but the newspaper must not fail, or even be behind one moment.

When Walton returned and climbed up the creaky stairs some of the poor people were going out to their work, with little tin buckets in their hands and their ragged and soil-stained coats over their shoulders. They looked at him sullenly, but he did not stop a moment, turn aside, or look right or left.

He had brought a man with him, a friend and young physician, who followed on as fast as he could after him. But when Walton pushed open the door this man was still only half way up the long, creaky, and tiresome stairs.

Walton had made the last four or five steps almost at a bound. He had heard a sob, as if the sob of a child, close to the door. He had been gone many hours. The sun was high in the heavens. He reproached himself that he had left that child—the two children, the baby and the baby-mother, so long in the midst of such terri-

ble surroundings. What if they were dying? What if she were dead?

It was almost dark, coming in from the full sunlight to where there was but one window, and that one window in the west.

The man in his excitement did not at first see clearly. He stood there with the edge of the door in his right hand, holding on to it tightly, looking straight ahead, leaning forward, listening to catch a single sound, a sign of life above the beating of his heart.

A rat stole out from a corner near the bed, and came sliding, creeping, crawling like a serpent along the edge of the wall toward the half-open door.

Then it returned and crept under the bed.

Then another and still another stole out and crawled along the farther edge of the wall toward the silent, the unutterably silent corner where was the little bed of rags and tobacco strips, hid away behind the little curtain of canvas on the frame of iron hooks.

The man started forward with horror at the sight of these accumulating vermin. He heard a sob almost under his feet, and looking down, there by the door, as if she had been waiting, waiting, waiting and weeping all the time, in silent terror sat the little girl.

"I'm—I'm—I'm so frightened!"

"My child, where is—how is auntie?"

He caught her up, and clasping her to his breast, started forward as the doctor came in and followed after.

"Dead?"

"Dead!"

And the doctor laid the little brown, tobacco-stained hand, which he had caught up carefully, kindly, tenderly, across the poor, hungry, hollow breast—the breast that had hungered always, always for love and peace and gen-

tloness and the pure highways of this mysterious journey over the isthmus which divides the two undiscovered seas.

The child continued sobbing pitifully. It had been crying and rubbing its little fists into its great black eyes for hours. Her cheeks were stained with dried-up tears. There were even furrows in her cheeks. This child of only a few years was already old and wrinkled.

Walton took it to the window, looked in its pitiful face, pressed its sobbing little breast to his, and tried hard to comfort it. He thought it did not understand what had happened, and that it was only afraid. He attempted to stand her down on the floor at his feet; but she held on to his coat with her little hands, and would not let go.

And the man was glad. He loved the child. He, too, was as lone and homeless and friendless and desolate as she.

Whatever it was, whether fear or love, made this wretched little creature cling to him, he was glad that it did so. It made the blood of his heart run full and responsive.

He felt more brave, unselfish, better for it. Still he had his mission to perform—an unpleasant task—a promise he had made the dead woman there the night before, and he would keep it.

He spoke to the doctor hurriedly, named the place he desired the dead to rest, gave some simple directions, laid down a little package of silver, with injunctions to call upon him for whatever more might be required in the way of expense, and then, taking one more look at the poor, tired little Dottie, now resting in her long, long rest, he turned to go, to take this child he loved to his one hated enemy.

"Mamma dead!"

The two men stared as the child murmured out these

two words between her broken sobs, and looked at each other in awe and silence.

Then Walton took her close up to the bedside of the dead, held down her little face, bade her kiss the cold, silent little toiler, and turning away, half-choking, hastened down the creaky stairs, with the child held close to his heaving breast.

In what solemn hour had the dead woman committed her secret to this child in that desolate place as she lay there waiting the footsteps of death? Who had told this baby the solemn mysteries of death and all the pitiful reality of life?

"Mamma dead!"

The child's head had sunk heavily on the man's shoulder in the car as he was on his way up-town to the home of old Colonel Lane, and he thought her sound asleep as these words again came up in a stifled sob from her broken little heart: "*Mamma dead!*"

The poor girl had wanted to be all in all to her child.

She was going to give her back to him, now that she could no more hold her little hand, lead her, guide her helpless little feet.

But the mother's heart had cried out there in the darkness and by the black waters of death in the dark and silence.

She had taught her to say the one dearest word in all tongues as she lay dying there.

And she had told her, while the sea of darkness rolled and surged by, that she was going away from her into the land of everlasting sleep and of dreams—to die.

And so it was that this child knew her mother, and should remember and revere her dead mother till they two should meet in the land of the stars which the mother had pointed out to her, without the aid of prayer-book

or of priest, from the one little window in those last nights of suffering and despair.

As is sometimes the custom, Matherson, in becoming engaged to Hattie Lane, had taken up his residence at her father's house, or, rather, he had gone to live in the same roomy, aristocratic house on Fifth Avenue for the few days now intervening between this and the day of his marriage.

Walton went directly to this house. His heart was full. His face spoke resolution and purpose in every line.

He held in his hand a little gold chain with a locket bearing Matherson's name, which he had taken from a recess in his pocketbook as he proceeded up-town on his mission of duty to the dead.

He rang with a force and jerk of the bell that was almost savage. A liveried servant opened the door, and stood full in front of the man with the pitiful face of a withered child falling low on his shoulder.

"I want to see Mr. Matherson and Miss Lane."

"I will see if they are in and will see you."


"They are in and will see. Say that Mr. Walton has called with a little child."

Before the servant could remonstrate the man had passed him and entered the parlor, splendid with mirrors and all the elegance of opulent houses in this quarter of the great city. He threw himself wearily in a seat.

The child's eyes were suddenly wide open. It had never seen anything like this before. Surely she, too, was dead and gone to the place her mamma had spoken of going to.

She looked about in full expectation of seeing her poor mother walk out, white and radiant in an angel's dress, and welcome her coming, as she had promised.

It was a late hour; and yet it was very early. But



this depends on what part of the city you are in. It was very late for down-town. It was early for up-town.

A haggard and plainly-clad man with a child's face on his shoulder is not a frequent thing at this hour in the way of a visitor anywhere.

But when that man visits Fifth Avenue, and is ushered in by a servant whose imagination does ample justice to all the beggarly aspect of the case, something unusual is to be looked for.

But the man's manner commanded respect. Through the not very firmly closed parlor doors in the rear the rattle of silver and the melodious voices of a well-bred party at breakfast could be distinctly heard.

And then there was a savory smell of chops and coffee that challenged recollection of the supper of fruit down yonder in the little tobacco room in the tenement among the rats. The child was hungry, starving, dying; but she had learned her hard, bitter lesson patiently and well. She did not ask for food or complain or say one word.

She only moved her pouty little lips and turned her great, sad eyes from the glittering mirrors and golden burnishings toward where the dishes rattled and the merry voices spoke soft and cheerily in the rear, and where the savory chops and coffee were discussed.

Pretty soon Mr. Matherson entered. He entered the parlor, napkin in hand. He had evidently come to see what Walton could possibly want with Hattie Lane at this hour of the morning, and with a child in his arms.

It was evident to Walton that he was not to be permitted to see this lady without a scene. After all, why should he see her? His business was strictly with her betrothed.

Matherson gave his hand coldly, but with perfect good-breeding.

Yet did he not hold the insulting flag of truce in the left hand, as if to signify that the parley could not last long, but that he must return to his chops and coffee?

Walton, tired, weary, broken as he was, would not have felt so bitterly as he did at that moment, had the man not signified this.

The little child he left sitting down on a far corner of a purple silk sofa, as he came forward to meet Mather-son. She was almost hidden in this imperial throne.

Her little hands had both laid hold of the silver arm of the sofa, and held on very tightly, as if the little thing feared she might be suddenly taken away without seeing mamma.

The hungry, starved and helpless thing was all eyes as this handsome man entered and stood before Walton, napkin in hand, and spoke so civilly and so softly, too.

She was certain she had never seen any one so elegant in all her life.

How her poor little soul and gentle nature insensibly fitted into these sweet and refined surroundings!

"I have brought you Dottie's child."

"For God's sake, man!—yes, yes, I see. But take her away, Walton! Take her away till—till—"

There was a rustle as of a woman's step outside the parlor door in the great hall. Hattie Lane was leisurely leaving the breakfast-room and coming into the parlor.

"And you are not going to acknowledge her? You are going to hide her away and bring her up without name or place? You are going to disown her as you did her mother at your pleasure and will?"

Walton had walked hastily down toward the corner of the sofa and caught up the child. He was holding the waif in his arms as Hattie Lane entered the parlor with her father.

"Don't tell her! don't! don't! I will do what is right. I will give you gold, gold, plenty of gold." Matherson had said this as he turned from the door and met Walton, who had the child in his arms, and was striding with a resolute step back out of the parlor into the hall.

"Why, Mr. Walton, how glad I am to see you! And you must have a cup of coffee with us. I am sure a cup of coffee to a hard-worked journalist would not be unpalatable. Come! I have been making it myself. It is steaming hot. Why, you are not to be always in a hurry? You are really not going?"

"I am going."

"But you called to see me?"

"I called to see Mr. Matherson."

"And the child? Why, the poor, motherless thing, how weary it is! And whom did the child come to see?"

"Mr. Matherson!" answered Walton, coldly and firmly. Matherson had turned as white as the flag of truce which he now twisted in his two hands.

All his happiness, her happiness—above all, *her* happiness, was hanging now in the balance, and was in Walton's hands.

"To see Mr. Matherson? The child to see Mr. Matherson?"

Hattie Lane's hands were clasped together suddenly now, and with strange alarm. Terror and pain were in her face.

Walton had passed out into the hall meantime and reached the door, opened it, and stood there, ready to descend. The child clung to his neck. Matherson still stood far back, twisting the napkin, and bowed with shame.

"Walton, Mr. Walton," cried Hattie Lane, following the man out on the great brown-stone steps, "whose child is this?"

What could he answer? What did he answer?

Then Matherson had told her nothing at all! Should Walton tell her truly all her lover's treachery, cowardice, the misery of the dead?

What good would that do? And then it would make her so miserable!

"Mr. Walton, whose child is this?" pleaded the woman again.

"*Mine!*" answered the man, and down the broad, brown-stone steps he swiftly passed, and left the woman he loved to her happiness.

The door closed behind him—the door to the tomb of his dead love. He stood there a moment in the clear, cold morning sun. Some people were passing hurriedly. Where should he go? What should he do with the child in his arms? He drew it closer to his heart, for it was cold, and he was, oh! so desolate and lone.

The child smiled, and lifting up its little arms, threw them about the man's neck, and answered caress with caress there in the cold and frosty weather. How homeless and how desolate in a city of homes! Whither could he go?

He had done his duty simply, silently, unselfishly. He was in a measure happy at last. He was a thousand-fold happier with this little one's arms about his neck there at the foot of the great, high steps of the brown-stone front than the man inside.

Let us leave him here, and with no fear for the future of him or his. There is a God, is there not?

Well, then, what is God for but to help a man at such a time as this, I should like to know?

CHAPTER XXIV.

"FIRE!"

It is not dignified, not even decent, to go through life crying "wolf," and distracting the world from its work in hand. And so I have been silent about the gathering storm and the under mutterings of the people down in the sea of slime and weeds and drift. But they had tasted blood!

This last-named fact has no significance, perhaps, to you of the city; but to the man who has lived with, the man who has seen more of, animals than of the one drunken animal, MAN, it means everything.

The mob was growing restless again. These men from the lower end of the great city had consumed their plunder. Would they go to work? Nonsense!

They had overthrown the grandest of all the grand houses on Fifth Avenue. Well, if they could overthrow and plunder the greatest, could they not overthrow others? The argument was very clear to the many hungry followers of the great leaders who had been hurled from the very high circles of Murray Hill.

It was a clear, crisp autumn morning that Walton stood out there on the high brown-stone steps with the child in his arms, wondering where he should go or what he should do.

The door had been closed behind him hastily, and little Dollie's heaven had been so suddenly swept away! Matherson's hand could not help shutting Walton out and

Hattie Lane in with all possible haste. He wanted to have that man with the child outside. He wanted Hattie Lane inside. He wanted to have these two as wide apart as possible, a wall as high as heaven between them.

And yet it was hardly necessary now. Hattie Lane had been brought up in the great modern hot-house school, and had learned the one great lesson of the day attentively and well—this one lesson which is in New York indeed more than all else in life. It is not only a part of the decalogue, but it is the decalogue itself, the very first of the Ten Commandments of New York: "THOU SHALT NOT BE POOR!"

This part of her life, this hard part of her soul, has been withheld deliberately to the last; and simply because it was so offensive. But had she been any other than a New York lady an explanation had been necessary long ere this last chapter.

But instead of explaining that her horror of poverty, her adulation of riches, and the strong money-getting and grasping nature of Matherson made her constant to him, it has been thought sufficient all through to simply keep the fact prominent that she was born and bred in Gotham.

Yes, she may have heard, she may have guessed, she may have even believed that Matherson had been guilty of a crime—she may even have strongly believed that Matherson was guilty of crime; but while she may have believed that Matherson was guilty of a crime, she knew that Walton was—the crime of poverty, the violation of the first great law of the great, drunken, reveling, and riotous city. I set this fact down briefly, hastily, and regretfully. But God made her, not I.

As Walton stood there an instant the pavements before him began to vibrate, roar, rattle, and shake.

Strong, plunging horses flew past, and on and up the avenue.

The engine was sowing the street with fire. The billows of black smoke were in the air.

The brave and faithful men on the engine lifted their faces for battle. They knew that terrible work was before them ; for they were of the people. Yet—that one largest word in all our vigorous English—they set their lips firmly for their work. These firemen felt that they were going to their death. Not one was missing from his place. Not one face was blanched. Yet they had been told face to face by the leaders of the people that the city was doomed.

They had been told by the people that the people had built New York and the people would destroy New York if they chose. And they had at last so chosen !

Another engine ! and another !—the horses flying, the great wheels whirling in the air, the smoke, the flames ! Surely, there was going to be hot work up in the wealthy quarter.

Walton hastened down the steps. He wrote as he ran. The child was on his shoulder, looking back eagerly, silently, at that closed door which shut out the silk and purple heaven where she had hoped to see her mother.

As he reached a certain corner, and passed before the entrance of a certain fashionable restaurant, he saw a strange man enter ; then another ; then another ; then another.

Then great numbers of strange men entered and hastily sat themselves at the tempting tables. The proprietor was wild with delight. Let the great city burn ! What was a fire to his good fortune ?

The reporter stopped suddenly. He set down the

child, and was edging up to a wall and out of the way of the surging throng rushing to the fire as he wrote.

He wrote with wild haste. He wrote even ahead of the facts. This seems strange ; but it is true. Indeed, were it not both strange and true, I should not trouble myself or you to tell it.

Times had been terribly dull since the first riots, since the people had tasted blood and become entirely drunken. But now, as the keeper of the great fashionable restaurant saw his tables filling up he stroked his fat sides and rubbed his fat hands with delight. Good times had suddenly returned !

But this is what Walton, the reporter, wrote for his great newspaper corporation down-town, even while the fat host stroked his fat sides, and full half an hour before the men began to grow drunk from the deluge of costly wines which they at the first began to order, careless of cost :

"At five minutes to eleven a stranger from the Bowery entered the Brunswick. This was the head of the mob which sacked and burned the city. Soon after this stranger came another, then another, then another, till a hundred hungry men were eating. They were men who had never been seen in this part of the city. They ordered costly wines, not knowing their quality, and not caring for the cost. In half an hour they were desperately drunk. In less than an hour the proprietor became alarmed, and attempted to close the house against the drunken mob that came pouring up Fifth Avenue. But the strange men laughed at him, and threw their empty bottles at his head. They opened wide the doors to the hungry crowd, and took entire possession. In sixty minutes from the time the first stranger entered, the Brunswick was sacked and in flames."

The engines poured up Fifth Avenue like a river of flame and smoke.

Walton turned, hastened on, climbed to the elevated railroad, and, with the child at his side up in the high garret, was, in less than half an hour, feeding the hungry press with facts that were as yet unborn.

From his high perch, which looked out and over the city, he could see billows and waves and worlds of smoke and flame far up and in the very heart of the opulent city.

The very heavens, so fair and restful and lovely in the morning, were growing dark and terrible. The city at his feet was empty. The child had not spoken.

The hungry city was feasting now. The child was starving silently.

Suddenly the reporter sprang to his feet, and for the first time turned pale. He had hoped the mob had all followed the cry of fire up and into the proud and wealthy heart of the city. Not so. He heard wild and drunken voices below. The flames had broken out in the city at his feet. Oh, the poor part of the city would burn, too, as well as the rich ! What a grand old democrat is fire !

The reporter went to the rear window—the child was in his arms—and looked out and down to the drunken, yelling, howling thousands who had kindled the fires in the rear and were fleeing away before the flames.

They had pillaged a saloon, and, locked arm in arm, singing "Sherman's March through Georgia," with a bottle in each hand, which they lifted alternately and at brief intervals to their lips, they sang and shouted, and drank and drank, and shouted and sang, while the reporter took up his charge. and again rushed back to his desk to set down this new detail of the terrible work.

When this "copy" was completed he rang for the boy.

No boy came.

He started. The little child crouched close up against his knee and trembled. The old ink-stained walls echoed and laughed like demons, but no answer came back. He started up in terror.

The man was alone with this child in the top of a lofty and tottering edifice. The flames had their teeth in the foundations. The smoke was bursting through the windows in the rear, and licking their red tongues around the presses. This fact must be noted. Again he sat down and wrote hastily. He drew the child closer to his knee with his left hand and wrote on rapidly. He did not mention himself, his sensations, his terror, and responsibility with this helpless child. He was writing of the burning of New York.

Suddenly he seemed to be aroused to the full conception of his peril. Front and rear the flames were bursting out, leaping like things of animate life toward other edifices far across the street.

Front and rear, and all around, were leaping, licking, hungry flames! He caught up the child that had not yet spoken, and dashing his back against the old ink and lead-stained door that shut off a little "composing" room used for getting out "extras," he burst it open.

He stood all alone. Empty as a tomb.

No sound or sign of life at all, or of anything. Not so much as a rat.

The child rather liked the place.

Here a printer had left under a leaden weight a portion of the copy the reporter had first sent in. There another had left his stick only half full and in a place where it would be easily thrown down.

Walton set it carefully aside.

Then, hastening on through an empty door, he saw, to

his great delight, that a high, narrow bridge led from the high level of the window before him on and out to the top of a substantial brick edifice that had as yet not surrendered to the besieging flames.

He caught up the child, and kissed it affectionately.

And then started to rush out and down, and so escape. But suddenly he stopped, turned on his heel, and as if smitten with regret at the thought of flight, went hastily and doggedly back to his work. He wrote now more resolutely than before, as if to make up for his error and the time he had wasted.

The great presses, as before suggested, stood in the rear and back, as did the main part of the dirty and rickety "composing" department. When he had written up all he had seen of the progress of the flames in this last sally, he arose, and taking up the child, went again to the back windows and looked down and out and into the dilapidated old wing where the presses were. They had surrendered.

The great iron engines were dropping one by one through the flames and far down to the ground.

The type in the vast composing-room here was melting, streaming down in streams of lead.

A river of lead was flowing from Franklin Square out and on and on, and out and into, and down to the deep mud and muck of the river.

Walton sighed and shook his head. At last, as the place was too hot for the child, he turned, took his copy in his hand from the desk as he passed, and then hastened through the small composing-room, still intact, and, holding the ever-silent child close to his breast, he sprang like a deer across the narrow bridge and above the sea of fire that singed his clothes and hair as he passed safely to the other side !

The instinct which had been cultivated till it became second nature made him pause, even here on this high housetop, and sweep his eyes over the burning island.

For it was literally a burning island now. The very earth was on fire. The oil, the gas, the rum, the thousands of filthy things which man in his drunken greed had allowed to accumulate on the face of the island appealed to heaven for purification.

And so the flame laid hungry and hard hold of the face of the earth, and burned and burned and burned to the very bed-rock !

But the reporter had but little time to remain. Not only his own life, but the life of some one not long from the presence of the Eternal was in his hands.

He hastened on—all doors had been either left open or had been broken open by plunderers, and so his way was easy—till he reached the ground almost on the first steps of the Brooklyn Bridge. And here the way was open to escape entirely.

He sighed again here as he looked back and saw the lofty and rickety old garret sink down in a gulf of fire.

Surely, his work was done. He had been the last to leave his post. The large word " DUTY " no longer commanding him to WRITE ! WRITE ! as one at Patmos.

The river was deserted. The bridge was deserted. Men had not been looking for water that day. They thirsted for something stronger. And hundreds of thousands had perished.

Leading the child, then taking it in his arms, the reporter walked on over the bridge.

* * * * *

The shivering little Wall Street hero of " exemplary " habits had been seen early in the day, hugging the edge of Union Square. Surely, here was fire enough for him

to get warmer by and stop shivering and shaking. But he shivered and shook, and shook and shivered as he never had shivered and shook or shaken before. Brandy was of no avail now.

At last the colossal front of one of the lofty edifices on flame broke loose and fell out and over the square in a vast sheet of flame, covering the mad and trembling multitude. Stone was of them. Let us hope he got warm and stopped shivering before he left this earth, or very soon afterward.

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